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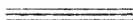
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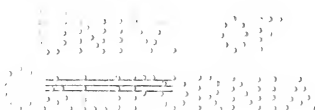




# Juniata Bible Lectures



*A SERIES OF TWELVE LECTURES, MOSTLY ON THE  
BOOK OF RUTH, DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF THE BIBLE SESSION OF  
JUNIATA COLLEGE, HUNTINGDON,  
PA., FEBRUARY, 1897*



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To  
*The Church of the Brethren,*  
and  
*Juniata College,*  
*the Church and School I love*

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## INTRODUCTION.

The publication of this volume is due to the forethought of my dear Brother, Elder J. B. Brumbaugh.

When it was arranged that I should deliver a course of lectures for the fourth consecutive year at the Bible Session of Juniata College, he employed, unknown to me, a stenographer to report the lectures.

This volume is the result. In justice, it should be understood that these lectures were given without preparation. In the midst of multiplied duties, and often after an all-night trip from Philadelphia, they were spoken with such haste and unpreparedness as to divest them of all literary merit. The lessons they convey are, for the most part, clearly expressed. Any attempt to recast the language would manifestly rob them of the peculiar style characteristic of their author in impromptu address.

They come to you just as they fell upon the ears of the large and attentive class of students that crowded into the sacred little chapel of Juniata during the early days of February, 1897. Primarily, they are intended for the ministers of our own Brotherhood. Argument is pushed and thought developed only far enough to awaken thought and inspire discourse. Incidentally, any thoughtful reader, concerned in the plain, simple truth that clusters about a noble life, and desires to live more consecratedly, will find, it is hoped, inspiration and direction.

That the Brotherhood may know something of the character of the Bible work done at Juniata, and that it may be the means, under God's direction, of doing some little good, this volume is prayerfully given to the public.

M. G. B.

Philadelphia, May 12, 1897.



## A SERIES OF

# ❧ Lectures on the Book of Ruth; ❧

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### LECTURE I.

In taking up this work, I am a bit puzzled to know what is the most profitable thing to do. For two years we have had the Book of Psalms. Before that we studied the Book of Job. I have concluded to take up the Book of Ruth. You will find it in the Old Testament. It is a short book, of but four chapters and eighty-four verses:—So simple in its character and beautiful in its story that a child might commit it to memory; and all of us, I think, ought to be sufficiently familiar with it to be able to tell in substance the story of the life of this marvelous woman of Moab; the beautiful, simple story of the life of Ruth.

There are but few characters mentioned in this book, and all of them are interesting—Boaz, Elimelech, Ruth, **Orpah**, Naomi; but you could not call it the book of Boaz, nor the book of Naomi, nor the book of Elimelech and preserve the remarkable interest of the story; for all the other characters and incidents in the book centre around and are subordinate to the peculiar interest and moral lessons growing out of the simple life of Ruth, the Moabitess. The book is well named, “The Book of Ruth.”

A word as to its organization. The first chapter of the book may be called a recital of the troubles of the righteous. It brings to us, I think, what we often learn, that the troubles of the righteous are by no means few. And then the chap-

ters beginning with the second and ending with the last, show how God delivers the righteous from all their troubles.

Here you have the two sides of a picture: First the dark side, second the bright side; first the sorrows, second God's restoring hand. Looking at the book in that way will give you a basis for its study. If you want to see how the life of this simple family went into eclipse as the result of their sins and their wilfulness, read the first chapter. If you want to see what God can do for a person even when he is down in this world, read this history from the second chapter to the end. The character of the book is peculiar. It is what, if we were to classify it as a piece of literature, we should call a pastoral. It deals with rustic life, with simple life, with uneventful life. It has nothing of the spirit of the city, nothing of kings and courtiers, nothing of forms and ceremonies. It is the simple recital of the simple life of a rustic people. For that reason it appeals especially to people who have been brought up in the country, people who love rural scenes and rural incidents. It seems to me the spirit of the book, as I read it over, more and more focuses itself around this one thought. It makes sacred the commonplace things of life. You and I have come to believe that the sanctuary is the most sacred place in the world, and that is true. We have somehow inherited the old Jewish notion that the sanctuary is the only sacred place in the world; that scenes in the kitchen, in the shop, on the farm, on the hillside following the sheep—scenes everywhere in the ordinary places of life—are not sacred; that God does not bother with us save when we get down on our knees in church. We do believe that God is everywhere, and that he looks after us, but somehow or other we have gotten the notion that in order to serve him we have to go into a church and sing or pray. The Book of Ruth is to set us right on this matter.

The Book of Ruth is to teach us that there is no place in our lives or no scene in our lives that is too common to merit the recognition of God. The faithful care of God is



manifest in all that we do. It comes to us with peculiar force, as we study this book, that the most commonplace things of life are the things that reach to the very throne of Heaven. There is a fine example here for young women of unselfish virtue, of absolute purity in time of great distress, in the faithful reward that came to this marvelous woman because she steadfastly did the thing that was right. There is also a hint here of a truth that we ought always to keep before us, that God knows the private affairs of our lives. He could look down into the simple heart of Ruth and know that it was pure. He could see every movement and impulse of her soul. He knew that it was clean altogether. So clean that he could lead her into such close relationship with himself that she became one of the ancestors of the blessed Christ. Then you have here also the picture of God's attitude toward widows and fatherless people in this world. The mother and two daughters were left fatherless and husbandless. God takes charge of these women, and God deals with them even better than they could have dealt for themselves, if they had continued in the original relation in the family. There is another lesson here that is rather peculiar. We have come to the notion, I think, lately, that to evangelize the world we should send missionaries out from the best places into the dark places. We have done that; all Christian churches are doing it—that is, the light of the church has gone out into the darkness of heathendom, and has illumined the world where before there was the darkness of doubt and skepticism, superstition and idolatry, and all that. And we have come to believe this to be a necessary thing. But here is a lesson in the Book of Ruth the very reverse of that. Here you have Bethlehem in the land of promise, the place where God had established his people, and where he had shed the light of his revelation and the instructions of his divine prophets before his people; but in spite of all that, this Jewish land had gone into darkness under the Judges. And God raised Ruth out of the land of Moab and brought her into the

land of Judea to spread the light of God among his own people. This would find a parallel if a man should grow up in India or Ethiopia and come to America to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to us, who think we have it, but who need to be re-enlightened. It is just the reversal of the modern missionary spirit. God brings a woman from a heathen land to his own chosen people to show what genuine Christianity and godliness and purity are. So a heathen woman brings the gospel of God into the land of promise. This is a real anomaly and a remarkable condition of things. When the United States forgets so much the spirit of God that men and women from heathen lands shall have to come among us and teach us what the churches are for, and tell us the language of Heaven that we have forgotten, then I think, indeed, it will be a distressful time in the history of the world. And God would certainly bring upon us then, as he did bring upon this people here, some dire calamity to teach us that in his judgment and in his providence we have a right to suffer for our own apostasy.

There is another peculiar thing in the life of Ruth. How many of you know the story of Ruth? How many of you know that she was really the great-great-grandmother of David, and that she came right into the royal line? I don't know anything more wonderful than that. This story of Ruth is a flash-light on the ancestry of David. How many of you know anything about your grandfather? Do you know his name? How many of you know the given name of your great-grandfather on your father's side? How far back can you go? Five generations? How many of you can go back six? How many of you can go back twelve? That is, you go back along the line, and somewhere you get into absolute darkness, and you cannot go any further. Would not you give something this afternoon if I could come in here and say, "I have just found a paper that is the history of your great-grandfather twenty generations ago, that tells what kind of a man he was?" Would you not sit up straight

and listen intently, and want to know what kind of a man he was? It would be a flash-light into your ancestry. Somehow I have more and more come to feel that if I could look down the line of men and women that have stood before you between you and heaven, I could understand a little better some of the things that you are and some of the things that you do. But such a thing is impossible after five or six generations. Here comes this woman and does acts of such significance that they are recorded in the word of God. It is a light on the ancestry of David, and on the ancestry of Christ. And it is to me a source of great comfort to know that men like David and Solomon and Jesse and the Christ himself were born of noble parents; that they had in their blood the spirit and power of women like Ruth. That is a comforting thought to me.

It brings two thoughts to me: How grateful we ought to be that we have good parents and good ancestry. The gratitude of children to a good father and a good mother is never to be measured. It is never to be thought of slightly. It is never to be forgotten in the measuring and estimating of your fellows.

It brings to us again, on the other side, this thought—the tremendous significance of fatherhood and motherhood in this world. What are you going to transmit to your children? What are you going to send down to the generations to come?

Are you going to give them impulses pure as that of Ruth, that made David and made possible the Christ, or are you going to transmit to the third and fourth generation felons for the prisons and convicts for the penitentiaries? What is to be your gift to posterity? What a significant fact it is that when you die all your influence is not buried with you. Your influence sweeps on into children's children, and moulds nations, and transforms the world, and makes history, and counts for good and for righteousness, or against God and against righteousness forever. You don't live to

yourself alone; you live for all those that are to come after you in the countless ages of God. You ought to live so to-day that you bequeath to those that come after you the best things. Ruth probably was not aware of the fact that her quiet, simple life was to make her a queen of Heaven among all people. But the fact that she lived purer and sweeter and cleaner than anybody else made her pre-eminently such a one as God should choose,—God, who knows how to pick. We may not find the queens; God always does. No virtue is lost. I think this throws a side-light on the character of the ancestry of noble people. The marriage of Ruth and Boaz is probably purely symbolical, to be interpreted as a type of the mystical union of the church and Christ himself; and this whole Book of Ruth is a type of how God brings in the whole world of the Gentiles and makes them the property of Christ, producing the mystical union of God and the Lamb. It is not going too far to say that the Book of Ruth is the Gentile's hope in the Old Testament, just as the Letters of Paul are the Gentile's justification in the New.

You will find nowhere, from Genesis to the end of the First Testament, anything so well suited to justify the claim that God from the beginning meant the gentile world to share in the promise of heaven as this Book of Ruth. Again, there is the thought here as to the author of this book. Nobody knows who wrote it. It was many years ago printed in the Jewish rabbinical writings along with the Book of Samuel. At another time it formed the concluding chapters of the Book of Judges. And some authorities have considered Samuel as the author of it. But that is exceedingly problematical. It is wiser to say that you don't know who wrote it, and you will be safe there, at any rate. It was written after David's birth, for David is mentioned in it. It was written after Saul's crowning, for the crowning of Saul is mentioned in it. It was written in a time of peace, and therefore perhaps before David became king. It was

evidently written before the birth of Solomon, since Solomon does not figure in the genealogy at the close of it. Where do you suppose this man that wrote this Book of Ruth, in the time of David, under the reign of Saul, and before the birth of Solomon, in a time of peace, got the material for this marvelous story. Now, there is no doubt in my mind that it had been a fleeting image of beauty in the traditions of this people for a thousand years—one of those legends that after a while blossoms into language and becomes the description of the sentiment of many people. Where do you suppose the people got the stories of Homer? He never made them. They were stories told for generations in the camp and by the fireside. Where did Sir Walter Scott get all the legends he has woven into prose and poetry? They were the folklore of the Scottish people, singing with her birds, roaring with her mighty ocean, until Sir Walter Scott came under their influence and crystallized them into verse and into language forever. So, I take it, that whoever wrote this Book of Ruth was directed to this beautiful legend that floated in the hearts of the people for ages and ages, until everybody came to accept it as one of the stories that was typical of Jewish home life, and then it was selected, by God's direction, to become a part of the inspired revelation. God transforms this rustic scene into a holy narrative, and makes it sacred forever.

Let us turn to the first chapter and see how it reads. Chapter one, verse one: "Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons." "It came to pass"—that is a peculiar Hebraic way of saying things. Notice the peculiar vagueness of that expression. "It came to pass." Who made it come to pass? Does it begin, "And the king brought to pass these things?" Does it say, "And in the course of time the people brought to pass these things?" No. It is a peculiar Hebraic statement,

common to the Hebrew people, by which they expressed the power at work among them from above, the power which they called in their theology Jehovah. It came to pass without any human help, even against human purpose and human power. "It came to pass." If you go out and see a great avalanche rushing down the mountain, and put your shoulder against it, what would happen? Do you think the avalanche would stop? No, you would simply go sliding along with it. It would go on whether you pushed or pulled. What matters that to the mighty power that is moving that tremendous, monumental mass down the mountain side! You don't figure in the process at all. It comes to pass. "It came to pass." That is all we know about it—an admission from the first of what I should always like my pupils in school to remember, that there is a power above human exigencies that does bring things to pass.

Here, then, we have a starting-place in this beginning of sorrows. This first chapter is a chapter of sorrows. First you have the famine. Does it not say that there was a famine? Who brought the famine? Did the men vote for it? Did the people decide to have a famine? Or did they decide not to have one? What would have been the difference? Is not the famine like the mighty rushing avalanche down the mountain? It is one of the things that came to pass. Who brought the black scourge into Bombay; and who is going to stop it? Who brought the plague into the city of London in 1665, whereby a hundred thousand lives were sacrificed, and the streets heaped with dead bodies too numerous for the hands of the living to cover with soil? The black death came to pass.

Well, we can rejoice here in the thought that there is a wiser power, as well as a mightier power, directing the forces that work over us and through us, and that, while we may plan, God, after all, operates. That, then, is the thought. Here was a punishment that was sent upon these people. This famine was a direct visitation on the part of God. They

had sinned, and the famine was sent as a direct mark of God's disfavor. A famine was looked upon among the Jews as an especially unfavorable omen, as a mark of God's intense displeasure. Turn in your books to Leviticus, 26th chapter and 19th verse. Let us see what you have there. "And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass." There it is, God's own statement. He will send this and that and the other thing to torment them ordinarily, but when they were very bad, then the famine. So that when the famine came, it was simply the language of God speaking out to them that they were very wicked. And the strange irony of the thing is that the famine was in Bethlehem. Do you know what Bethlehem means—the etymology of the word? "The house of bread." And in the house of bread, no bread; and over in Moab, the land of the heathen, to the east of the lake, in the rugged gullies of the mountain, lifted high almost to the sky, there was plenty. Strange irony. The beautiful valley of David, that was named the land of bread, breadless; and in the mountain gullies to the east, where only the heathen went to live, there was plenty and abundance. You can build a house in the valley, and drive your poorer neighbor to the hillside. But God can blight your luxury, and he can bless the poor soil on the hill-farm of your neighbor, and make it a pleasant habitation and a source of fatness and delight to him. You can plan for the better things, and plan the poorer things for your neighbor, but God can reverse your plans, and turn the better into worse and the worse into better.

What do you think a man in Bethlehem would say when he saw a Moabite come into that city? He would say: "That is a poor country, your farm; hard living out there; why don't you come here and live in a land of fat? Look at Bethlehem; look at our magnificent plains, our splendid vineyards, our abundant harvest. How much better off we are!" Do you know what a city boy thinks of a country

boy when he comes into the city with a red handkerchief around his neck? He thinks: "I am living better than you are," and he looks at him with disgust. God can make the country boy the ruler of the nation and the city boy a toiler in the penitentiary. God can send the country boy to preach his gospel in the city and win it to Christ, when the city is too weak and impotent to raise its own voice and its own influence against its own crimes. And if it were not for the steady stream of country boys who stand in the pulpit and in the busy places of trade and mercantile pursuits to make sweet the life of the city, I would not like to write, even in my fancy, the doom of a city growing up on its own self-centred sins. It is the leaven of the broader life from without, streaming into the city, that sweetens it and makes it wholesome. And little Moab, that was not much of a country in comparison with proud and haughty Judea, becomes a source of food and life to this proud people when the hand of God settles upon them in judgment and His winds cease to blow and the refreshing rains to fall. Don't point your finger at other people with the feeling that you are better than they are. You don't know what to-morrow morning is going to be. You had better be glad that it is no worse with you, and let other people alone. You never know what is going to be the outcome of to-morrow. Here, then, is another thought. Why should this famine have been sent? For the simple reason that every child of God needs discipline. When we get stiff-necked and stubborn and resolute in our rebellion, and hostile in our attitude, and indifferent in our devotions, and independent in our spirit, then God must come with the tremendous discipline of famine and fire and sword, and scourge us to bring us again into decent relations to himself.

Now, Elimelech made a great mistake. Not that it is my province to criticise anybody, but I only say what I think. He ran away from God's visitation. He thought he would run over there for bread. What did he get for it? He got a



grave in Moab. That is all he got. Here was a man in Bethlehem, with a home, with a wife and with children, and the famine comes on, and he runs away from his home and goes over into Moab that he may have bread—takes his wife and children along. And, sure enough, they get the bread. But what else did he get over there? Look at the multiplied sorrows of that family. He went to his grave. His old wife went begging back in poverty and hunger to her own people; his two boys were buried; and one widow turned indifferently away from her mother-in-law. And Ruth is the only one in the whole lot, and she purely because of her beautiful life, that comes out of the scourge of Elimelech's flight with anything like credit to herself, with anything like glory to God. It is an awful thing. I want to talk to you a little about this thing of picking up and running away from God's judgments. You think you cannot get on well where you are. The farm is going down, the old horse has got the spavin, the roof leaks, did not get many acres out last fall, and what was out only raised briars instead of wheat. What am I going to do? "I am going to borrow enough money to go out West and become rich. I will go out to Dakota or some other place and build a new home." What are you doing? Think about that before you do it. Here is a truth that ought to be impressed upon the minds of our people, that the fixedness of a race measures its development in civilization; that it is the roving propensities of people that mark their barbaric condition. Show me a people that flit and are migratory, that give up Pennsylvania for Dakota, Ohio for Kansas, Kansas for Louisiana, who move about just because they can, and I will show you a people that need civilizing. They have gone back; they have not learned that a primal duty of every man in this world is to settle, to stand for something in the community, to live for the glory of God in the place where God puts him. Quit this running off. I have no objection to people building up Dakota, but I confess to a sort of

hesitation about seeing our people as a church flitting out to the borders of civilization, twenty or thirty of them moving out to a strange community, away from the church, away from divine worship, away from home, away from friendship, out on the borders. I say it is a risky business. It complexes, if I may make a new term, the work of the church many-fold in this country.

I often think of the Quakers. What made them a power in the history of this nation? They came over here and squatted, and sat on the same soil, and they have hatched out of that the highest state of fertility, the highest kind of home life. They remained right there by the hearthstones of their ancestors. You don't find them flitting out to the borders of civilization, away from church and people, trying to make six cents more than they could have made at home. They have learned not to sacrifice the fruits of their toil, the contentment and ease and culture of their lives, for a few pennies more than they get if they hold to these things. They have learned to live above many follies, and have approximated at least the dignified attitude of a spiritual community.

I want you young people to think about that—you are going to buy land after a while. And if you are not careful you will give up a thing that has ninety-nine elements of good in it because it has one element of bad. You will go hunting eternally for a thing that has not one element of bad in it, and finally settle down to a thing that has about sixty elements of good and forty of bad in it, like Elimelech in Moab. You will run away from school because the hash is not mixed right. Everything else is good, but that one thing does not suit you. You will run away from your home because your father wants you to farm another year and you do not want to. Although everything else is there, home and church and father and mother, you will run away out West. And you girls chafe and fret in your home life, and want it better. Nearly every man and woman in this

world feels that they would like to better their condition. They would like to get into a better job than they have. We want better things. My good friends, did you ever stop to think that, perhaps, discontent with the position you now hold is God's hand upon you, disciplining you into power in that place? When you leave a place and give up a position and take to a new one, do it because you have outgrown it, because you are master of the thing you have given up, and not because you have failed in it. Outgrow it; don't let it outgrow you. I don't know just how much I ought to talk about this, nor to what extent one can charge this upon poor old Elimelech; but he did get up from his home land and run after bread. And I have known scores of other people that have done just so. And he found a grave in a heathen land. And what you will find, and what these other people will find, I do not know. But I question the wisdom and the value of this everlasting running around after new things.

## LECTURE II.

In the study of this first chapter I want to impress upon you one or two things that seem to be involved in the first verse. The last thought that we considered was the spirit of discontent that seems to take hold of us, and that drives us from time to time into such a state of mind that we are willing to make almost any sacrifice of present conditions in the hope that by doing that we will better our conditions. So we pack up and move and shift and run around. I want to impress again this one thought—upon what a little turn we make such decisions. It was simply an objection on the part of Adam to one prohibition in Eden that drove him out of the presence of God. The man had ten thousand things that were right and pleasing and satisfactory, but just because he could not have ten thousand and one things, he objected, and out he went. What would you call that sort of game if children were to play it? You would say it is childish or foolish. And yet we play the child when we are older than children. And we go out into the land of Moab when we might have stayed in the land of promise. The narrow way is not always attractive to us. The hard test that Jesus put to the inquirer, "Sell all that thou hast and follow me," makes living in the narrow way hard for some people. And so they refuse to do that, and they go out into the fields of Moab, where everything looks abundantly fair, and they forget that the land of fairness may be to them a land of death, and the land of famine abandoned may be, indeed, to them a land of fatness and of promise.

We have in the second verse a picture of the exodus of the family; the family changes its place of abode. The husband goes, and the wife and the two children. Now, it speaks something for the character of Elimelech that he could take his whole family with him when he decided to

change. It showed that there was a recognition in the family of the father's will. And so the father, deciding to make the change of location, takes with him, apparently without protest, the entire household. The whole family goes. It is a pretty picture for one to stop and contemplate—a united family. The wife says, "If you go I will go with you; you know better than I; I will go along," submitting; not setting up an arbitrary will against the judgment of the father. The boys submit as boys do not always do, and decide to cast in their lot with their father even in his changed position. So out they go. And the fact that they all went, it seems to me, is a matter that places upon the father a tremendous responsibility. For now he must answer for his own change of position and for the effect of that upon the wife and upon the children. We forget sometimes, when we make a change, that we are really choosing, not only our own future, but a future for others as well. We must never shrink from the thought nor refuse to face the responsibility for the effect of that change upon others who are obliged to change with us. That must always be taken into account and considered as one of the essential responsibilities that rest upon the acting spirit and responsible head in any move. They start for Moab.

What a journey it must have been, eastward by Jerusalem, and down over the plain and across the valley of the Jordan and over into the land of Moab! I think it would have been an interesting thing to have followed that family in that exodus; to have studied the mixed emotions of the four persons who constituted the family in their exodus. How the father must have felt, how the mother must have felt, how the sons must have felt, in surrendering the home and home associations and the land of their God, and going out into a strange land, into a heathen land, and simply for the one purpose of winning with greater ease bread for the table, comfort for the body. That decision to go influenced the whole after-life of each of the four of them. There was

no taking back or reconsidering after the choice was made. And every one of the family suffered by reason of the decision of the one. Every one was affected by the choice of the one, and all had to share in the burden of responsibility that rested primarily upon the father who determined to go. After a false step like this—for I think we may take it that God intends to teach that the movement outward from the land of promise was distinctly a false step in the life of this family—God's mercy still followed them, but followed tempered with vengeance, and punishment was measured out upon the family for this act. There is comfort in the fact that God will descend even into the land of Moab and hear our calls for help, and watch over us there, and answer our prayers. If we earnestly call to him even in heathen places and places of sin, he has promised to be with us always. They are therefore to be looked at in the light of wanderers from God. And in that respect they simply typify the common experience of thousands of us. We go from the righteous training of the home, from the prayer-meeting where, as children, we were carried by loving parents, from the church service where we were trained to sit and listen, out into the world, away from the family altar, away from the prayer-meeting, away from the services of the public sanctuary, wanderers from God. Many of us who sit here this afternoon are not half as devoted to the services of the church as we were when we were children. We have gone out. We have lost something of the early life that came from the training of godly ancestors. We are in Moab; and we must suffer for our wanderings, just as they suffered for their wanderings. People do come back sometimes. Sometimes empty, as did the Prodigal, sometimes in bitterness, as did Naomi, and sometimes they never return, as in the case of Elimelech and his two sons. For you must bear in mind that of the four who went out, only one returned, and she in such absolute sorrow that she was anxious for her name to be changed, and so changed that her neighbors,

wondering, said, "Is this Naomi?" Here was the hand of God touching this family and breaking it into shreds, and sending a shattered fragment back in sorrow and distress to start over again the long series of struggles to build up a home and a righteous career.

The first thing I want to call your attention to specifically is in the third verse—the first break in the family circle. They all got over into the land of Moab. And their experience there at the first must have been satisfactory. They went for bread; they got it. The third verse reveals the first tragedy in the family, the first breach in the family circle. And for the first time in the history of the little family, when they sat down in the evening-time, after the toil of the day, there was a vacant chair by the fireside. Father is gone! They had buried him in a strange land, among heathen people, under the shadow of heathen gods. I don't know of anything, after all, more tragic than to think of the sad end of a man like Elimelech, a man of influence and honor and power in his own place, going out to Moab and dying there. He is buried alone, and is forgotten both at home and abroad. And that is the tragic end of his bad choice, in the moment when God's hand in the famine was laid upon his home place for his own good, for the reproving of the sins of the community, and for their return to righteousness and God. Take an old tree, and lift it as carefully as you please, and transplant it as carefully as you can, and it will die ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Take one of those beautiful maples at the College gate, and haul it down and plant it in front of the Court House, and the chances against its growing are exceedingly great, and the chances for its life are exceedingly small. It is a hard thing to transplant an old man from one place to another and expect him to flourish in the new condition. If you have a father who has lived for fifty years on the farm, it would be almost criminal for you, his child, to drag his gray hairs and bent form from the scenes

of his life into the town, simply because it suits you better to take care of him there than it does out on the farm. Think about this. If there is anything in the world that you ought to do for your father, it is to make him comfortable; and one of the things that you can do for your mother is to make her comfortable in the place where her heart grew and her life flourished, and where all her affections are centred. I never like to see a young couple starting out into life, and choosing a career, dragging their parents out with them into the new career. How the old folks must suffer in silence because of such a change as that! Don't do that sort of thing. One of the duties of a child is to honor his father and mother; one of the ways of honoring them is to make them comfortable in the place where they can find comfort. It was a hard thing for the old man when he went over there and died. He could not stand the transplanting.

He did not go there to die. He went there for bread; but he got the very thing he did not expect to get. Bringing to our minds the lesson of the uncertainty that invests every life—uncertainty as to its circumstances, uncertainty as to its character, uncertainty as to its continuance. We cannot escape these uncertainties, we cannot prevent them. You will not do in this world, in spite of all your planning, the things that you intended to do. You will not live the kind of life that you have resolved to live. You will not live the number of days that you would like to live. This uncertainty faces all of us. There is nothing in this world that gives one more cause for thought than the way his life is ordered, as opposed to the way he would order it. Take your pencil, and in your memory go back two years, and draw how you had planned to live the past two years—draw a line along to show how it was to be, and then draw another line to show how you did live. How different it has been! Did you ever think of that? Did you think about how absolutely unlike the way you intended things to be they



really are? Who knows? That comes to me with increasing force as I learn from day to day of the career of the boys and girls that used to be at Juniata College here with me. Let us go back fifteen years; there were a lot of people in the school. I can remember nearly all of them. And not one of those living to-day has had anything like the kind of an experience that he contemplated or wished for. It has been so different! In some cases so much worse, in some cases so much better, than they had occasion to expect, that nobody in this world has a right to say that he can order for a single day of his existence the purpose of his life. "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" God disposes of our careers, and our lives are not what we would have them to be. And here we have but a type of every life's disappointment. Going for one thing, receiving another; studying for five years in school to become a teacher, and never teaching; planning for ten years to become a physician, and never practicing the profession; praying for five years to become a missionary, and never becoming one; fighting for five years against the spirit of God, and joining the church at the end; boasting of our smartness and infidelity for a minute, and joining the church at the end of our boast. You know nothing whatever of the ordering of your life. And what a blessing it is that God providentially keeps from us anything like an adequate knowledge of what life is going to be for us for the years to come! I think if a flash-light could reveal the experiences that are before me for a year to come, that it would cause us to give up in despair and die of a broken heart to-day.

You don't know what you have to face; neither did this woman, neither did this man, neither does any one know what God's providence has in store with reference to the future, any more than we did know what it was with reference to our past. How little we know of life, how less we know of death, and how infinitely less we know of destiny

after death. We know that Elimelech lived. We have learned of the kind of life he lived. We only know that he died. What became of him after death? Who knows? The Bible is silent. Man lives and man dies, and we bury him. The future state—who knows the next page in his history? Who knows? God only knows that. “If a man die, shall he live again?” How little we know about our own destiny, about the events which shall enter into our own lives in the years to come. It is said that an old Indian chief down in the southern part of the United States ran away with his tribe from a fire that swept across the prairie, until he came to a river, where he planted his staff and said, in his language, “Alabama,” which means “here we may rest.” But he had scarcely put up his tepee and swung his hammock in his wigwam, until hostile Indians came, and the place which he had chosen for rest became the place of his own murder and the annihilation of his tribe. You cannot enter a place and say, “Here I am secure.” Fleeing from one fate, you face another—running out of Bethlehem to get away from the famine, and entering into Moab to find death. So experience runs in the history of every life.

Then take this thought, which I think every man who undertakes to plan a home ought to keep in mind—how long are you going to live? Write down on a piece of paper now how long you are sure you are going to live. How long did you write? How many could write twenty years? How many could write twenty minutes in absolute certainty? Here is the thought. Before you establish a home and take a wife and children into any place in this world, don't you think that you ought to consider the possibility that death may take you away in a moment, and leave your wife and children helpless there in the place you have chosen? A man ought to choose such a place as would be at least decent and fitting for those of his family who survive him. And yet I doubt if a single man ever planned a home with that thought prominently in view. He thinks about the condi-

tion of the land, the nearness of the market, the price of wheat, and maybe, if he has a little common sense about him, he thinks about the readiness of access to the school and the church; but he does not give a thought to what might happen to his wife and children if he were suddenly called away, leaving them in the place he has chosen. Notice the gradual process by which this woman was bereaved. First she lost her husband. Then she had her boys to comfort her. Then she lost her boys. Then she had her daughters-in-law to comfort her. Then she lost one of them, and had the increasing love and devotion of the other to comfort her. Suppose that Naomi had lost husband and sons and daughter-in-law at one stroke. It would have been a tremendous affliction. It was bad as it was. It was infinitely better that God ordered a sequence of time in her afflictions. He laid upon her the hand of affliction, but also extended to her the hand of comfort in each trial she had to face. ✓

She had hardly gotten up from mourning for her husband until the wedding-bells sounded in her home. Look at the fourth verse—from the shroud to the wedding-garment! There was a wedding out there in Moab soon after the funeral. How soon after you don't know. But it was not long. Notice how it comes right after. Elimelech dies and is buried. Then what? The boys get married. That is the history of all human experience. After you are dead you will not be missed half as much as you think. Those that love you will bury you out of sight to-day, and go on to plan for their own comfort and future to-morrow. The boys were no worse than a multitude of others. They bury their father in sadness and pain to-day, and to-morrow marry and plan for the future.

What is the use of our worrying and fussing and arrogating to ourselves important thoughts, and feeling that we are indispensable? We drop out, and the next day the marriage-bells ring. Our life is a memory that

scarcely affects the life that moves on from day to day. These marriages were natural, marriages made in the land where people live. Ninety per cent of the people that get married in this world get married for geographical reasons. You will marry for geographical reasons. That is, you get to know a little circle near you, and the geography of convenience and nearness determines your choice. How few people break away from that. Take your family into Moab, and you can put it down as a fact that in Moab they will marry. Move out into Colorado, take your young children along, and you will have a family there, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Jewish boys, sons of Elim-elech, marry the daughters of Moab, Orpah and Ruth. Was it right that these boys should marry heathen wives, against the express command in the Old Testament law that this should not be done? I have neither time nor inclination to enter into any discussion of the rightness of that. But I have time to say that it is exceedingly inexpedient. You may marry outside of your own church affiliations, but it is a risky thing to do. I don't know how that affects you, and I don't care. But this word of advice on that question: If you want to live happily, you had better belong to one church, all of you that live in one family. It will save a great many family jars and a lot of broken and bruised feelings. Here is a young man that says, "I will marry a young girl, and then I will convert her over to my own faith; she will be all right afterward." Ninety times out of a hundred that works the other way. Instead of you bringing her in, she will take you out. She may be the weaker vessel, but she is often the stronger power.

Again, I think it is a tremendous risk for any young girl to marry a man outside of the church, in the hope that, because you marry him, he will join the church. In the first place, he will not do it; and in the second place, he ought not to do it. He ought not to join the church for your sake, but for Christ's sake. And if he will not do it,

before for a right and a proper purpose, you can set it down that he will not do it afterward. What shall I say of those foolish young people who marry sots and idiots, in the hope of reforming them? You had better pick a good husband; because, if you get the best, you won't have a better one than you deserve if you are good yourself. Here it turned out well. Orpah was a good wife. Ruth was a noble woman. But in the majority of cases these things are risky. And it pays in the end, for the comfort of your life and your value as a Christian man in this world, to make your marriage associations along the line of your church affiliations. This is, moreover, a debt that you owe to the church.

The second bereavement came quickly. The young men die as their father died. Here you have a strangely sad, perhaps an unusual, experience—three widows in one household, without a friend or provider. We ought to be most careful about making those unions that are never going to be broken. I suppose young people mostly think about the union of marriage as the great thing in life. It may end suddenly. It may end disastrously in the survival of a life that is worse than death. But you can form an affiliation in your youth that will never end—association in the church with Jesus Christ, who will be with you always.

The awakening comes after this tremendous affliction. The old widow, with her two daughters-in-law dependent upon her for guidance, awakens and recognizes her peculiar condition. She makes her resolve in the sixth verse, a resolve upon which she acted. What was the reason for this act of hers? She had heard from home. It was not in a telegraph message nor in a telephone message. But, as was common in those days, travelers moving to and fro, after weeks and months, brought the news from foreign or remote countries. I suppose that old Naomi had been asking year after year, as the dusty traveler had wandered into Moab from Bethlehem, "How is it at Bethlehem?" and every time she got the answer, "Famine, famine still." At the end of

ten years, a messenger comes with the news that there is plenty again in Bethlehem. Because she can find bread there, the old associations and the old influences that had slumbered for years reassert themselves, and she says, "I will return to Bethlehem." In the seventh verse the pilgrimage home begins. From this time Ruth leaps to the front as the great character in the family tragedy. Naomi drops into the background as a mere shadow; Ruth stands out as the great character of the book. They start together on the homeward journey. And the significant fact that I want to call your attention to in connection with the homeward journey is this—that conditions at home may change at any time, and call us without a moment's warning on the homeward journey. When are you going to go home to your parents? You don't know. The telephone or the telegraphic flash may call, and you must go home on the next train. Conditions have changed there; there is sickness there, or perchance there is death. You are called home! You never know just when you will be halted in your career and suddenly called home—called home to your religious self, called home to your God. They start down the road.

Here we have, in this beginning of the journey set forth in the eighth verse, the first test of affection between these women. Here for the first time Naomi opens her mouth and speaks. Naomi first of all thinks of others instead of herself, and manifests here on the highway the generous spirit that typifies the character of her great descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of unselfish devotion to others, the spirit that made her think of the good of others even to her own discomfort. If I were a painter, and had power with canvas and brush and colors, I would paint the road out from Moab, with the light falling to the west, and these three women girded for the journey, and I would try to read aright their faces, the different emotions that I think played upon them as they started. Here was Naomi,

probably a rag in her hand, containing in a little tied up bundle everything that she owned in this world, for she was excessively poor. There were Orpah and Ruth — young, sad, but resolute. And what would you put into the faces of these three women to show forth the character of each, and make it unlike the others, and tell the story that the future chapters of this wonderful story of Ruth portrays—the story of the fading resolution of Orpah, the story of the rising resolution of Ruth, the story of the steadfast Christian resignation of the old mother? I would want that picture before I would want “The Angelus” or “The Gleaners” or the “Breaking of Home Ties.” I would want that as a painting in which Naomi would typify the returning soul to the home of God, leading heathen ones with her by the power of love. What a scene; what a painting! What a travel that was as they set out on their journey for Bethlehem and for bread! Then you have, as they start, the voice of Naomi pronouncing a benediction and a valediction upon these two daughters-in-law. Will you turn, if you please, and read it in concert?

“And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother’s house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.” That is a tender utterance: she prays to God that they may find rest each in the house of her husband. And then there was a good-bye in the last line. How was that? I want you to think of the simple gift of that old mother-in-law. She could not give them money, she could not give them property, she could not give them any gift as they went back. She could only give them a kiss. It was not much, but everything that her old soul could give. She was as poor as Peter, when he was entering into the temple, and was asked an alms, and said, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I

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thee." She gave them the only thing that she had—a blessing from a tender, loving heart. This she gave to them, forgetful of her own self and her own sufferings as she would have to trudge alone to her abandoned home and her own unhappy place.



## LECTURE III.

In the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth verses is the second test of the devotion of these women. They both stood the first trial. Now Naomi gives them a second—a delicate hint that if they follow her to her country and away from Moab, their country, they will find no comfort there whatever. She can't give to them sons that will be husbands to them. Neither can they hope to marry into families of any respectability under the Mosaic law, since they are heathen. There was no hope of comfort, only the prospect of sitting in distress, and dying in broken-heartedness. She bids them go back: "Return to your own land and be content there, for in my land there is no prospect for you whatever." Really, here is a crisis. In making the decision here between going and returning, it is really a choice between going back to Moab and returning to the old heathen gods, or going over into Bethlehem and accepting the true God. It means what god they should choose, what religion they should espouse, what shall be their whole after life. Orpah evidently understood that this was a choice of great significance to all her future, because you will notice that she returned, or went back to her gods. She did not go back to her home; she went back to choose the religion that had dominated her early life. Ruth gave up the worship of Shemosh, and went over to worship the God of Israel, the God of revelation. The crisis then came on this second test. "Choose your religion; if you come with me you will have to change your religion." That was substantially the statement given out by the old mother-in-law. In that crisis Orpah fails to stand the test. Ruth, on the other hand, chose wisely. She stood the test.

The final separation is one that bases itself upon a religious choice. I know of nothing in this world that ought

to determine the separation of friends except religion. There is nothing that I know of that is sincerer, higher, more enduring than friendship between people, the affection of families for each other, the devotion of kinsmen to each other. Nothing should break that tie of blood and kinship excepting a difference of religion. There is nothing above the family tie except the church tie. A man is called a hero when he gives up his life and his home for his country. And he is also heroic when he adheres to his family and gives up his life for that. And he is more than heroic when he gives up everything for the sake of religion, as did Ruth here in this instance. Orpah, then, in this separation, becomes the type of the mere professor of religion—the person that follows in prosperity, but has no enduring basis for following, so that when the test comes she falls away. In the hour of trial, in the hour of adversity, in the hour when the outlook is by no means promising, then Orpah lacked stability of character and strength of purpose to choose aright. Just as you, when tempted by sin, give up your profession of following, and lapse back into idolatry and irreligion and inactivity. Ruth is a type of the Christian man or woman whose affection is deeper than that of mere lip-service, and whose life is genuine—a real Christian life. Notice the difference. Orpah could follow just as well as Ruth under ordinary circumstances; but in the crisis of life Ruth triumphs, Orpah fails. It is no use to compare these two characters, because they are so absolutely dissimilar. And yet up to the moment of choice they were both alike. Both had husbands. Both had buried their husbands. Both clave to their mother-in-law. Both followed her partly on the way back to Bethlehem. So far there was no difference between the genuine lover of religion and the mere professor. But when the trial came, there was all the difference in the world. You and I may walk arm in arm for ten years. So far as the casual observer may see, there is no difference between us. Both have the same aims. We

follow the same pursuits. We are practically the same. People speak of us as friends and as having common impulses and common tendencies and common ends. But wait; after a while there comes a trial, and one of us fails. Then it is revealed to the world that the ten years of seeming union were in reality ten years in which our lives were growing wider and wider apart. And in the end absolute separation occurs. There is no comparison to be drawn between the life of Ruth and the life of Orpah. On the surface they seem alike; really, they were as remote as the north is from the south, the east from the west. Orpah is like a great many of you. You get up on Sunday morning and wash your faces and comb your hair and put on your clean clothes and go to church. And on Monday morning you forget that you have been to church on Sunday, and never think of church until the next Sunday comes. You are formal Christians. You have no interest in the work of Christ. You are very willing to be a Christian on Sunday, when it is a natural and easy thing to be a Christian—when it is the accepted thing. But Ruth is the type of the woman and of the Christian who steadfastly remembers that the worship of Sunday should be reflected in the life of Monday; who really is more of a Christian on Monday than she was on Sunday, because she lives in quiet on Monday, without observation, that which she could not live without observation on Sunday; who rejoices more in the hour of trial, because then she can live closer to God, than in the hour of prosperity, when the burden is shared by others. There is all the difference in the world between these women. I would not give a fig for the one; heaven has not enough of wealth for the other. You can be an Orpah in your merely professional attitudes of life, or you can be a Ruth in the more genuine aspects of life. In the one case you are not worth the bread you eat to-day; in the other, there is not enough bread in the world to compensate you for your living. It is the difference between the woman that returned and the woman that clave

unto her mother-in-law. If I were to put it to a vote, there is no mean slave on earth that would not vote to select Ruth and leave Orpah, in the test. Nobody would think of comparing the women. No artist on earth would ever paint them with similar faces; no man on earth would think of them with equal feelings. And yet I want you to understand that there was not much difference between what they did. They probably cooked equally well, kept house equally well. But the one was true, the other was not true. And that is the difference between heaven and hell when you come to measure it in its extremity. What evidently you need to understand here, the thing that is to be kept standing before your mind and mine, is that Ruth's character is the one that ought to fructify and enrich all Christian characters. We don't want Christians for Sunday and demons for Monday. We want Christians that will go with Christ to the cross. Did you ever think how easy it must have been to be a follower of Christ on the Sunday before His crucifixion, when He rode into the city with the palm wreaths around Him, with the followers shouting Hosanna to the King, and with the children strewing flowers in His way, and with the whole multitude evidently believing that here at last the Christ was coming to establish His kingdom upon earth? It was an easy thing then to shout and be a follower of Christ. To be a follower of Christ that day meant, as far as they could see, immediate recognition in some great high place in the power that was to be, in the kingdom that was to come. But just wait until Friday of that week. Where were all these followers and shouters when Friday came, and the blackness of heaven settled down upon the earth like a pall, and the cross went up, and the Christ was crucified? Where were they then? The Orpahs had gone back; but the Ruths were at the cross, as true in the hour of adversity as in the hour of prosperity. The real followers of Christ followed Him to the cross, and shared with Him in the crucifixion outrage, shared with Him in the struggles of

death, and loved Him when they had absolutely no hope of any reward for their love. Is there any difference between the shouter on Sunday and the worshiper on Friday? The one Orpah could be; the other took a Ruth. I don't know which you are.

You will never be anything like Ruth in this world, when the hour of trial comes, unless you do what Ruth evidently had done, unless you school your life by years of training into the attitude of standing the test when the test comes. People are not heroes in a flash. You don't do these things in a second. Ruth lived up to this crisis in her life by long years of consecrated devotion. And this was the legitimate fruiting, the necessary outgrowth, the natural culmination of the real things of her life, the inner impulses that had fed her soul, and strengthened it for weeks and for months and for years. Orpah, on the other hand, had lived an idle, thoughtless, unconsecrated life. In the test she had no reserve power. Don't look into my face and tell me it is a matter of luck that the one happened to choose one way and the other happened to choose the other way. It was the culmination of years of different living. The one had been living piously, the other had not; the one had been living nobly, the other had not; the one had been living heroically, the other had not. When the crisis came, the one was noble, the one was heroic, because her life had been moulded into that. You are going to be great some time. Two or three of you want to be great. If so, prepare for it now. You must live for it in the inner circles of your soul. You must sit and think, you must kneel and pray, you must walk and muse, you must lie down and meditate; and then, in the strength of all that, your soul will rise up in a moment of emergency and smite to the right and to the left, and you will triumph gloriously. But you can't do it if you have not schooled your life for that sort of thing. Ruths are not made in a day.

The final test, the great test, the real test, which was a

hard one for Ruth, you will find in the sixteenth verse. It made it all the harder for Ruth to make a choice because of the example of Orpah. How would you feel if you were going somewhere with somebody, and he were to say: "I am not going any farther. That is the limit of my going. Good-bye?" As that one would turn, would it not be a strong string pulling at you to turn likewise? Suppose two or three of you were going out here some night to steal apples from Mr. Fouse's orchard. I merely say "suppose." And one of the boys, with just a little more manliness than the rest, would say: "I am not going there. I am going back." It would be a strong string pulling at your consciences, a persuasive voice calling to you to go back also. There is a piece of ice on the river, thin and cracked. And you say, "Come ahead; let's go over this." But some one else says, "No, I am not going into danger." Then you too would hesitate, would you not? But Ruth did not hesitate. She went right ahead, ready for the thing she had resolved to do, regardless of the example of Orpah. That proves the strength of soul in the woman.

*analogy*

Half of you are living as you are because of other people. There is no self-centred purpose in you. You are like a flock of sheep; one runs through the gap, and you all follow. You are like a flock of birds on the wing; one flies, and the others fly. The number of persons with independent lives and independent motives is exceeding small. If all of your companions were to drop out of the game, you too would stop playing. You have no backbone. You have not the first elements of Ruth's character. You are in the church, perhaps. If every man and woman in the church were to leave it, you would go with them. You would not stand up like Ruth for what you thought was right. You have a multiplicity of judgment; you have no originality. Ruth set out here against the advice of her mother-in-law and the example of her sister-in-law; and she did the thing that was right. That makes her heroic. I don't care where you

*analogy*

find that kind of person, it is the power to stand right up and say and do the thing you believe to be right that makes heroes. That is the stuff God needs in you and me to build us into anything like decent lives. That lacking, it is frail material on which to build anything. Who is a back-slider; what kind of Christians are these that slide into religion to-day and slide out of it to-morrow? Who are they? They are people without any individuality; who, when others shout with them, shout for the right, but when the world blows against them, they keep quiet and slink into corners; who have no power to bear adversity, nor strength of purpose to accomplish anything. You may come here to school to get an education, but you have no strength of purpose. You will not sit down and think for a year; you have not the patience, you have not the grit to do that. You are a coward. Some of you won't stay two years; some of you won't stay three. Somewhere along the line is the measure of your value to yourself. When do you give up? What makes a bulldog absolutely indispensable to his owner? His value is determined by his unrelenting grip. He takes hold and stays there. That is a quality in human nature that counts. If you want to master your books, if you want to become a mathematician or anything else in this world, you must take hold and stick. That is the sum of it. It is making up your mind that you are going to do one thing, and then sticking to that purpose. I had a friend; he did not live far from where I am standing. He was in nine or ten businesses every year—that is, in his mind. He would teach one day, and then he would take a notion that he ought to have a shoe store. He would look into that for a week, and then he would think of studying medicine. When that was over, he would think probably that the gun business was the one for him. What he wanted was to become a master of shooting-irons, and own a store in which he could sell revolvers and shotguns. What was the matter with him? Simply this: he lacked continuity of purpose. He could

+ how to

not stick to anything. When I was a boy, I used to see, when I went down to the river in the winter, little bunches of weeds rolled up like a ball. They would get on the ice, and the wind would come, and you could see them go whirling here and there. Did you ever see them? Like crazy idiots they would go, worse than Zigzag Ike on a holiday. No purpose at all in their wanderings. Simply the victims of the whim that carried them. We laugh at the weeds. There are many of us that are living as erratic lives as the weeds driven by the wind. And if the weed could scratch its path upon the Ice, and tell its wanderings, and you could scratch your path and tell yours, yours would be worse than the weed's. An absolute determination to do the duty she had to perform is what made Ruth glorious. That is why she did not return. That is why she clave unto her mother-in-law, and triumphed in these three tests in spite of Orpah's example.

If I had time, I would tell you not to be influenced very much by other people. It does not pay. I mean by that, when you are prompted to do right, when you are put to the test, and the temptation comes from others who are not as conscientious as you are, who are not as anxious to do right as you are, and who are willing to live below what your conscience teaches you you ought to be, pay very little attention to those people. Live on in your devotion to God.

"Here," says Ruth, "I will register something before heaven and before you, Naomi, that will settle this whole matter." Turn in your Books to the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, to show what seems to me to be the most sublime utterance in the whole Book of Ruth. I know of nothing more beautiful than this sentiment of Ruth's. It is Ruth at her best. It is her graduation day. She has taken her long course of affliction and trial, and now she comes up here and gives expression to her life purpose. How many of you know the words—can repeat them from memory? I think that, next to the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Command-



ments, and perhaps the 23d Psalm, I know of nothing more worthy to be committed to memory than these words of Ruth.

Notice several things in connection with her statement. It is a resolution made in early life. Ruth was still a young woman. She is spoken of as a damsel by Boaz; a widow, but still young; probably not out of her twenties. Some of the commentators agree in their belief that Ruth was about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age when she did this. It is recorded of Beza, a churchman of mediæval times, that he blessed God, first, for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ; second, that he was converted to the religion of Christ at the age of sixteen. He wanted it young in life. I like the spirit that induces you in early life to make up your mind that you are going to do something, that you are going to be something, that you are going to live for something. I measure the value of your life in the future by the kind of thing you choose to adhere to. I have a right to do that. Here, then, you have an early choice. It was made in youth. A choice for life, a choice for death. She says, "I will live with you, and die with you, and be buried with you." It was a choice for God and a choice for eternity. Notice the peculiar form of that choice. When you return to your rooms I want you to read that over and over, again and again, and notice this: Ruth did not say to Naomi, "I am going to give up my country and my kindred and my husband's grave and my whole past experience; I am going to give up this and that, and that, and that." Ruth never thought about what she was giving up; what she did think about was the things she was taking up. "Thy people shall be my people, thy God shall be my God." You can find nowhere a better idea of the proper attitude of the young convert to the religion of Christ than that which is characteristic of this choice of Ruth. She was not thinking of what she was giving up; she was thinking of the supream gain in what she was taking up. There are a great many foolish people in this world who think of the sacrifices. Ruth thought of the

glory of joining in with the people of Naomi, the God of Naomi. She did not care much for the things she was giving up; she cared infinitely more for the things she was taking up. You are not really ready to join the church and do right until you can see in a Christian life an added gain over the life outside—when you can see that it is not a gain you are giving up, but a gain you are taking up. It is a gain to do right, not a loss. As long as we regard it as a loss, we have not the right idea of religion. You must give up your friends and your horse and your bicycle and your everything. What mustn't you give up? Add them up in your head—got to give up this and that. It seems to me that God must get weary sometimes looking over the list of foolish things that people conceive they have to give up before they can join the church. What can you gain? Look to that. What did Ruth gain? She gained a new people, new friends, a new God, a new religion—a tremendous gain in her life. There are compensations in the religion of Christ. If you were to sit down and think as long and as hard about the things that you can gain by joining the church as you do about the things you will lose by joining the church, you would come into the church sooner, come into it better, and be more contented when you are in it. That was what Ruth did. That is what makes her speech beautiful. It would have infinitely marred Ruth's choice and Ruth's life if she had said, "I am going to leave my life and my religion and join yours." That is not the way to put things.

The choice was, first of all, an affectionate one. It was born of her absolute love for the old woman. I think that a great many folks like old people. I think old people are liked for two reasons: first, because they are expected to die soon, and folks think they have to give them a great deal of affection very quickly, or they won't live long enough to get much. It is a sort of feeling that they will have to hurry the process on as fast as possible. Then, some old people are loved for what they are expected to leave, and for nothing

else. The number of old people who are sincerely loved, genuinely loved, earnestly loved, as Ruth loved Naomi, is not as great as we sometimes suppose. Ruth, you see, had no outlook here. Naomi could not give her a farm, nor family standing, nor prestige of any sort. All she could give Ruth was poverty and an old woman's benediction. But that was enough for Ruth, because she loved Naomi. So I say, in the first place, it was an affectionate choice.

In the second place, it was an entire choice. It was a giving up of absolutely all that she had. It was obeying the injunction which her own descendant afterward gave to the young man: "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor." In the third place, it was an humble choice. She chose an humble place in life. In that way, I think, exemplifying or typifying the character of Lazarus later on. She chose the poor things first, that she might have the better things later on. My father always taught me, when a boy, to eat the poorest apples first, and keep the best ones for the last. That was his notion, and it was right. Lazarus had his better things in Abraham's bosom; the rich man had his better time here. Ruth was like Lazarus; she chose for the future, and made an humble choice for the present. Then it was a determined choice. There was no wavering about it; like Paul's, "This one thing I do." In the next place, it was an instant choice—that is, when the moment came that the choice had to be made, she made it; exemplifying another character of the New Testament scriptures, of whom it was written, "They arose and followed him." Did they say, "We will go home, and come to-morrow and report to you"? That is the way we do things. We are asked to do right, and we say, "I will think about it." Somebody asks you to join the church, and you say, "I will think about it." When Christ went along by the sea and saw people fishing, and said, "Follow me," did they say, "Wait until next week; wait until we have sold our fish and fixed our families comfortably, and then we will come"? No, "They arose and followed him." Ruth did the same thing. She did not wait; it was an instant choice.

## LECTURE IV.

In the eighteenth verse of the first chapter, after Ruth made her heroic statement, Naomi "Saw that she was steadfastly minded." I desire to bring that thought of the text vividly before you as the keynote of the woman's character. She was steadfastly minded. And when Naomi saw that, it ended all controversy. There was nothing more to be said, no further importuning to go back. When she heard Ruth make the statement that you find recorded in the seventeenth verse, there could be, of course, no debate beyond that. There was a determination, a resolution, a fixedness there that admitted of no debate or argument. Just as long as you are not sure of your ground, not positive of your position, not clear in the controversy, you are going to waver and shift and hesitate, doubt and be defeated. But here was a woman that won from the beginning, because she never changed her position. She had some sand, some grit about her; something of the quality that makes valiant people; the steadfastness which too many people lack nowadays, as they did even in the days of Ruth.

We come, in the next place, to a study of the journey homeward to Bethlehem. "So they went until they came to Bethlehem." How do you suppose Naomi felt coming back home? She had been away ten years. She says herself she went out full, she came back empty. An old woman now; not a thing in the world; poor; not even known of her neighbors; so changed, they look at her in surprise and say, "Is this Naomi?" Can you imagine something of the feeling that you would have, if you were to go out from your home in luxury, in comfort, stay away for ten years in a strange land, and come back poor, bowed down with losses, alone in the world? I suppose there never was a sadder home-coming than the home-coming of old Naomi. The one thing that

made it tolerable was the devotion of the daughter-in-law, Ruth. How do you suppose it must have been to Ruth herself? Every step of that journey to Bethlehem took her more and more and more into uncertainty and into doubt. Ruth was literally walking in the densest doubt that a human soul could enter. She had given up everything; she could look forward to nothing. And she walked right into that maze of uncertainty with the one simple thought that she was going to stick by Naomi, no matter what comes. She did not know what was to be met, she did not know what to expect. She had no revelation of anything except that she would be true to her vow. What do you suppose they talked about on their journey to Bethlehem? There never was any further reference to going back. It was now a companionship for life. That was settled. The past is over; now they begin to speak of the future, the little prospect of a hut, a cabin, a few rooms, a chance to beg, the hope that somebody's charity would be exercised, an earnest desire on their part to live, an absolute determination to stick by each other, evidently a protestation on the part of the old one that she would be in the way, evidently an earnest beseeching on the part of the other that she should not talk so. And so, the one with encouragement, the other with discouragement, they wander along hand in hand, crying, no doubt, half the journey; lying down at night under the stars, as Jacob did, and waiting for the morning light to push onward. For this journey was by no means a short one, and by women afoot by no means an easy one to accomplish. At last they come to the city of Bethlehem, and find the city alive with astonishment. Some of them say in surprise, "Is this Naomi?" Some of them say in condemnation, "Is this Naomi?" as if they would pronounce upon her a denunciation for having abandoned her people ten years before, and run away from the dispensation of Providence. Others would say in contempt, "Is this Naomi?" And still others would say in compassion and pity, what you would perhaps have said had you been there, "Is

this Naomi; poor thing, is this what she has come to?" However different the point you choose to consider the exclamation from, it showed supreme surprise upon the part of the inhabitants of Bethlehem. They could not realize the marvelous change! Do you remember how Rip Van Winkle came home after twenty years asleep? Nobody knew him; he was in doubt whether he knew himself. You cannot imagine how your own soul would feel if it were to go out for ten years and come back changed as Naomi was changed. You don't know how lonely you would feel; you don't know how much astonishment you would produce. "Is this Naomi?" Think about that. Remember what she said: "Don't call me Naomi." ✓ That was a word in the Hebrew that meant "favor," "beautiful," "prosperous." She had no favor; she had lost her beauty; she had lost her prosperity. She says, "Call me bitter, call me Mara, for the Lord hath dealt heavily with me."

✓ She had had a hard life. When you get so low in this life in the depths of sadness that you are willing to forget your name and give up everything that designates your past, when you do not want even to be reminded of it in the sound of the voice, you are to be most supremely pitied. "Do not call me by my old name any more! Let not even the sound of the voice suggest the past, that now no longer is. Call me bitter, for such I am. It has gone badly with my life." How many of us ten years from now—think about this; you don't realize it now—will sit down somewhere and say, "Call me bitter; I have had ten years that did not go well?" Some of you will do that just as sure as you are sitting here. I do not like to say it, but I know it is so. Some of you, ten years from this moment, will be sorry that you lived the ten years, as old Naomi was sorry that she had lived. In the battle it is going to go against you, and you will want to forget that you ever lived. I don't know whether there is one here that might surrender so far his higher judgment, and higher sense of what is right, as to be willing to forfeit life

rather than to live on in the bitterness that may come; but it may be so.

A friend of mine this afternoon, up in my room, one of my boys, said he did not know, until he traveled this past year, how many people live as they do. I said to him what I say to you now—you don't know what it is to be well-born and have a good home. You are infinitely blessed above eighty per cent of the human race in the very fact that you have a good father and a good mother and a good home. When these are gone, it is a tremendous loss to any soul. Poor Naomi! That is what you would call her. But you would not speak of it to represent the loss of her property. Not poor Naomi in that sense, but poor Naomi because of your heart's being touched with sympathy for the abject misery that has come upon her life, the dark clouds that have settled down tight over it, without a star or a sun to brighten it, and the only warmth stealing out to her lonely heart the devotion of her daughter-in-law; only that, no more. ✓  
When you get so far in this world from where you now are that you will have but one friend, you will be an object of pity and commiseration, whoever you are. Well, it was home again to Naomi, bitter as it was. It was coming home to start the world anew, to begin it all over again. The only thing left for her was to start, right in the dust, to build again a new life and a new prospect in the world. They went in by night. I don't think she would have had it in her heart to enter the town in daylight. If the lonely woman ever had a wish in that long first night, as she sat alone in Bethlehem and thought of the days that were, thought of the grave of her husband in Moab, thought of the graves of her two children in Moab, thought of her abandoned daughter-in-law, thought of the one that sat by her side, it was, "I wish I could live it over again! If I only were back at the beginning! If I could only do it over, and do it differently!"

It is so easy to see our mistakes after we have made them.

It takes the wisdom of God to anticipate them and avoid them. It brings to my mind an old story I used to read when I was a boy, of a man who wrote like this: "It was New Year's night. An aged man was standing at the window looking out into the darkness. The snow was falling; the wind was blowing. He saw before him his own life stretching like a great path down through the ages, through the years. And he saw, as he walked down the path, where the road parted. He had chosen the one road, and had refused to take the other. He had gone down that road year after year. It was the wrong road. It had taken him to the bar-room and the gambling-den. It had taken him to poverty and to disgrace, to all manner of crime. And in his old age it had brought him to the border of the grave. As he stood looking out into the night, he said: "Oh, Youth, return! Oh, give me back my early days! Put me once more at the forks of the road, that I may choose the other instead of the one that I have trod.'" That would be the wish of any heart. Some of you are now saying to yourselves, young as you are, that if you had it to live over, you would live life better. But it is very doubtful whether you would. Is there any use of grieving about what you have done? The thing to do is to get right now—to start like Naomi and Ruth to build up on the present conditions. Forget the past. Make the most of the future. No use to sit and grieve about what has gone. The thing to do is to change and begin anew. "So they came home in barley time." That was lucky, to come home when there was something to eat. It was peculiarly a lucky thing in that country, because in barley time the poor had exceptional opportunities. Do you know anything about the laws of the Jews concerning gleanings? I will read to you a little from the Bible. It is a book that you don't read more than you might. It would pay you to read it more frequently, especially the five books of Moses. They are the basis of the whole development of the Word of Truth.

"And when you reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt



not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. I am the Lord your God.”—Lev. xix. 9-10. You are not to pick up what you drop—that is gleanings. You understand what gleanings are—bits of grain that fall from the hand of the sickler, and that are prohibited from being gathered. They are for the people that come after. What grapes fall to the ground, or what you miss in the first picking, you shall not reach for again. There is an express provision made in the Book for the poor. “When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.”—Deut. xxiv. 19-22. Why should these things be left? “For thou shalt remember,” etc. This is the Mosaic law on poverty and gleanings in the field. Evidently God’s design in making such a provision is that those that are poor shall mingle with the others in society, and that they should have a chance to gather by their own effort sufficient to nourish their bodies. That is God’s way of dealing with them. I often wonder what God would say if he were to carve out a new revelation and a new statement of his feeling concerning our modern method of dealing with poverty. We tie the hands of the poor. We incarcerate them in almshouses, pen them away from society, and make them dependent. God in his law made the poor independent. He appointed a

way by which they could honestly earn food for their bodies. We gather our own gleanings, and pay it in taxes to shut our paupers from the sight of the people. The tax money which we gather from our gleanings barely gives to the poor half the sustenance that they would win for themselves, were we to leave in our fields the gleanings which we are obliged now to gather to pay our taxes. Naturally, therefore, this conclusion would come—turn the poor out, stop paying taxes, and leave the gleanings as God intended from the beginning. We could not do it now, because there would be a lot of salaried officers that would lose a job! But God never provided for that class at all; he did provide for the poor. We provide for salaried men, and whatever is left we give to the poor, and our sympathy with it. But sympathy does not clothe and feed the hungry. It seems to me that we need to think along these lines.

✓ Note two or three things that grow out of the home-coming of Naomi. An intense love for home and an intense anchorage to the home scenes is an important thing in life. She came home. Of course the changed condition was tremendous. It is said of the Swiss soldiery that when they go off to fight in Spain or Italy they cannot bear to hear the "Ranz des Vaches," the song that calls the cows down into the valley, because that song makes them heartsick for home, and in the night, after that song is sung in the camp, they will either desert or die. Oh, the power of song! How many of you have ever read of the tremendous influence that Jennie Lind exercised over that immense audience in Castle Garden, in New York? She sang so delightfully that they encored her, and then she sang "Home, Sweet Home." What was it that came to their hearts? The appeal for the home place, the love of home in the hearts of those people. And when she afterward repeated that splendid performance down in Washington, Daniel Webster, sitting in the audience, rose to his feet, overcome by the power of the song, and sang with her. She sang to him, and he sang to her. For more

than twenty minutes each endeavored to outsing the other. Marvelous revelation of the power that song has to bring up to the mind the devotion to home! Some of you are away from home now, and you are looking forward to the time when you will be able to go home; and how glad the home folks will be to see you! The home feeling is powerfully strong in us. Any one is to be pitied that has to go home and find everything so changed that there is no joy or comfort in the home-coming. On the other hand, one can afford to think of going home if he knows that the song of welcome will ring out. This makes me think of the songs that shall ring out from the throne of heaven when the ransomed souls of men and women shall have their eternal home-coming. We are all out now in the land of Moab, wandering around, strangers, foreigners. We often sing, "I am but a stranger here; heaven is my home." We had better make such use of this strange country, and live so in it that when we come home it will be with songs and rejoicing both in the heavenly home and in our hearts.

Turn to the second chapter. When they came back, what were the circumstances under which they found Boaz? "And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz." In this second chapter we have the claim of the weak upon the strong—the relation, in other words, between the rich and the poor. I want to impress upon you the fact that Boaz was a good man, although he was rich. If you have listened to the talk in this country during the past six months, if you have heard the specious arguments of demagogues, you naturally inhibit the idea that every man that has a dollar in his pocket is a rascal, and every man that has no money in his pocket is a gentleman. We have talked ourselves into the notion that wealth goes with wrong, and poverty with right. A more false and more dastardly notion than that could not be incorporated into the thought of a people. The richest man in the state may be the best man, and the poorest man

may be the worst man. To denounce one class because of their wealth, and to laud another class because of their poverty is wrong. Rightness and wrongness are not based upon the amount of money one possesses. It is based upon one's life and the use one makes of the means at his command. Here was Boaz, a mighty man; and he was a good man. He was just as good as the best in Bethlehem, and, I have no doubt, a great deal better than some people who, since the days of Elimelech and Boaz, have gone around traducing and maligning men because they have property. Boaz probably inherited his property, as, under the laws of the Jews, he had a right to do. And he probably increased his property; because he was an earnest man, an honest man, a hard-working man. He went out to the harvest field. He did not ride around in a carriage. He did not go to the fashionable resorts, nor lie down in idleness. He went out into the harvest field and asked that the spirit of God might come upon his workers. He was not ashamed to work. Perhaps he was the greatest man in Bethlehem. But his money had not interfered with his goodness. We want, somehow, to build up in this country a different notion. We do not want to malign the men with money and praise the men with poverty. We want to speak kindly of the man who does kindly things, and we want to denounce the man that speaks unkindly of anybody without cause.

In this country to-day, this whole wrangling, warring strife that goes on between riches and poverty is built upon the suggestion that everybody that has money is bad and everybody that has none is good. The fact is there is goodness and badness in every class. Some of the men that have not a cent in the world are in jail, and others of them, no doubt, ought to be. Some of the men that can show a dollar ought to be in jail; some of them ought never to go there. Some of them are good and some of them are bad. You will find worthy men in every walk of life, and you will find unworthy men. True enough, the Bible says that increasing

temptation comes with increasing riches, and that it is hard for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven. But he can get there. That is what I want you to understand. Take an institution like this college; it is absolutely dependent upon the charity of Christian men and women of means—that is, its life in the future depends upon their giving a sustaining and a helping hand. It is my good fortune every now and then to sit and talk with a man who can write his check for millions of dollars. And he is just as modest, just as good, just as gentlemanly, just as righteous in the light of things as he understands them as any man I know. His money has not injured him in the least; it has only increased his power to do good. And his money has done good in a dozen ways that I know of, and in dozens of ways that no man knows of—that God alone has any record of.

Let us learn that a man like Boaz, who knows what it is to earn money and use it in righteous purposes, is the kind of a man that we can afford to emulate. I shall not cut from my acquaintance any young man who begins to earn money, if he knows how to use it for the good of the community and for the purposes of God. If he hoard it, then his money is his curse, and he is a curse to his money. But if he use it in the endowment of charitable and educational institutions, in the alleviation of misery and in a life of sacrifice and devotion, God can consecrate his money and make it a multiplied power for good in the world. He was a mighty man, Boaz. And here beside him in the night was a young beggar. Will he use his money for God's poor? In the morning she turned to her mother-in-law and said, "Shall I go out and glean?" That was a hard question to ask. Suppose you were to go out of here this evening, and you had not a cent in the world, no food, no place to sleep to-night, and you would come to me at the door and say, "Shall I go out now and beg?" It would be pretty hard for you to say, and harder still to do, would it not? Ruth comes in the morning twilight and says to old Naomi, "Shall I go

and glean?" What did it mean to Ruth? It meant to take advantage of the pauper laws of the old Jewish dispensation—to go out and take that which God had set aside for the orphans, the fatherless and the widow and the stranger. To go out and glean meant to openly confess the fact that she was a beggar. That was the introduction of Ruth among the people of Naomi, into the religion of Naomi. She begged the first day that she was in Bethlehem. What did the old woman say when the question was asked, "Shall I go and beg?" It must have wrung her old heart with the deepest agony that she had yet felt, when she had to bow her head and think of her own hunger and the hunger of her daughter-in-law. It must have been a tremendous trial for her to say, "Go, my daughter." How beautifully the spirit of Ruth shows out in that question. She would not even beg, and put the stigma of begging upon Naomi without Naomi's consent.

"Go, my daughter," was necessary; and out goes this young woman a self-appointed and branded beggar, to glean in the fields of him in whose sight she might find favor—that is, where she might get a chance to glean. "And she went and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz." "And her hap was." They did not have fences. There were dozens of sicklers and dozens of gleaners. "And her hap was" to go into the part of the plain where the men and damsels of Boaz were working. It says, "Her hap was." Do you think it was an accident? Do you think it was a mere blundering chance? It is the same word Jesus Christ uses in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It happened that a man went down that way. But what we call chance and luck is just a part of God's universal plan. What we would call "her hap" was God's will. She went into that field because God intended that her sweet, pure spirit should go to the place where it might be glorified. She went there, and she met Boaz, and gained the exaltation of her life. It

was the hardest thing in her life to go into the field without knowing a soul, to begin to glean and beg. Do you suppose she cried? In answer to that question I think of the poem of Keats, "To the Nightingale":

"Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird,  
No hungry generations tread thee down.  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown.  
Perhaps the selfsame song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth when sick for home,  
She stood in tears amid the 'alien corn.'"

I think that was a climax in her life. She could not have gotten lower in any way in this world. And out of that God exalted her step by step. We shall leave her there. Let us study Ruth in the harvest field of Boaz.

"The fragrant sheaves of the wheat  
Made the air above them sweet;  
Sweeter and more divine  
Was the scent of the scattered grain,  
That the reaper's hand let fall  
To be gathered again  
By the hand of the gleaner;  
Sweetest, divinest of all  
Was the humble deed of thine,  
And the meekness of thy demeanor.  
She stood breast-high amid the corn,  
Clasped by the golden light of morn,  
Like the sweetheart of the sun,  
Who many a glowing kiss had won.  
On her cheeks an autumn flush  
Deeply ripened—such a blush  
In the midst of brown was born,  
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Thus she stood amid the stocks,  
Praising God with sweetest looks.  
'Sure,' I said, 'Heaven did not mean  
Where I reap thou should'st but glean;  
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,  
Share my harvest and my home.' "



## LECTURE V.

“Her hap was” to light upon the fields that were owned by Boaz. To glean would be attended with a great deal of uncertainty as to whose field she would get into. Here in one piece of ground, unfenced, were thirty or forty sets of gleaners and thirty or forty sets of reapers. It happened that she fell in with those that were working in the fields of Boaz. The chance was about thirty to one against her doing it. God sent her into the field of Boaz. Although the Book says “It was her hap,” it was God’s will. The things we call happenings in this world are the things in which God shows His wisdom and moulds our lives. Upon what little things the destiny of a human life depends! You came here to school. What sent you to school? Perhaps some turn or accident somewhere in the home organization. You have received in the school an entirely new outlook upon life. It may be that you form acquaintances here that result in the forming of an entirely different career. Sometimes the dropping of a word by a minister, or a teacher, or a friend, changes the whole life of the person to whom the word is spoken. There are in this room now, sitting here, people who can testify that they absolutely have changed their lives because some time in their career somebody said something that influenced them. The mere accident of Ruth’s going into the field of Boaz, instead of any other field of the many around, determined the whole force and circumstance of her future life. I take the position that God could not let circumstances as tremendous as those that hung upon this to be brought about by mere chance. He intended it. She went into that field under divine guidance and divine knowledge. If your life has been changed by a mere accident, as you call it, I would like to impress upon you that God was behind the accident.

In other words, it is probably wise to say that there is no chance; that the word luck should not be in the language; that things do not happen; that when we make these confessions they are but indications of our weakness and inability to see that what we have and where we are is but what God has intended, and which in his wisdom he has not seen fit to reveal to us. So we will read here for "her hap," God's design was that she should go into the field where Boaz was. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way."—Psl. xxxvii. 23. That looks as if it were true that Ruth went out there with her steps ordered of the Lord.

You have a picture in the fourth verse, continuing through the fifth to the seventh verse—a most delightful picture of country life out in the harvest field. What is more charming than a harvest scene? What more beautiful than to see the bending grain ripe for the harvest; the busy gleaners following after; the master coming down to his field to see how the work is coming on? You have here in this little pastoral Book of Ruth one of the most charming views of rustic home life you will find anywhere in the Sacred Word or in profane literature. It brings to my mind hundreds of scenes that I saw in southern Europe—young men and women harvesting in the fields, the harvest bowing before the sicklers. You don't see those things here nowadays, with our modern patent machinery by which we gather things up and rush them into market. But in those Old World scenes we have pictures of rural content that we have lost in our modern society. What was the relation existing between Boaz and his workers? You will find that the relation was most cordial. He was on speaking terms with the men who worked for him. He loved them, and they loved him. They worked for him not alone for the money, but they worked for him because of the devotion they felt toward the master. They were not merely wage-earners, time-servers, but they were devoted attaches of the great man in his toil; they loved

him. I wonder how many people to-day work in that spirit. Go down to the factories and shops, the foundries, forges and rolling-mills, the multiplied industrial establishments of this country. Take my word for it that three-fourths of the men that come in there as overseers are hated by three-fourths of the men that work under them. There has grown up between the master and the workman a feeling of antagonism, which leads the master to feel that the workman is doing the least that he can do to earn his money, and a feeling on the part of the workman that the master is making him do the most that he can exact of him for the money. The one wants to do the least, and the other wants him to do the most. There is a feeling of hatred engendered, and men strike, and there results this persistent war and friction between capital and labor. This is really lying to-day at the foundation of all our political disturbances. The money question, the economic question, everything that has agitated the people in the last presidential campaign, bases itself upon the fact that a spirit of distrust and hatred has grown up in this country between the different classes in it. Nothing in this wide world in the way of legislation will effectually and permanently improve that. Mark what I say: you must get back of all law, for you can't drive me to respect you any more than I can compel you to respect me. There must be a regeneration of the hearts of the capitalists and the laborers in this country. And I confess to you that I don't know of anything in all the world that would relieve the industrial outlook of this country as rapidly as the change of heart that would come from the genuine conversion of every man that works and every man who oversees work. The religion of Jesus Christ would break down that antagonism. Do you know of anything else that would? Laws won't do it. You cannot persuade men to drop their petty jealousies and effect a reconciliation. These conditions are deep-seated. They are in the souls of men. You don't know until you go out into the working districts and come

in contact with laborers who are discontented, and converse with manufacturers who are likewise discontented, what a tremendous gap there is between man and man. And yet these very men will pretend to sit in church, the workman and the employer, and worship the same God. That can't be, and foster anything like a religious life. In other words, what I want to impress upon you is this: the friction that has grown up in our industrial life has made impossible anything like the rapid growth of Christianity. That is, you can lay at the hands of the industrial classes this solemn indictment, that the feeling of strife between them has made impossible anything like the quick evangelization of the world. When you go out and talk about war between labor and capital, and stir up strife, and array the classes against each other, you are really arraying influences against each other that make impossible the spread of Christ's gospel. There are many people that don't think about that in politics. They simply shout and yell because they think they will get into office in that way. And the votes they gather around them represent votes and influences that stand over against one another. This feeling of separation makes impossible the growth of the spirit of Christ. How can God's spirit work in a community that stands over against itself and hates each other? Why, if Jesus Christ were to convert one political party, the other would turn persecutor of religion!

We have allowed our political prejudices and party strife to erect such barriers between us that even Christ's gospel is crucified and limited in its power. It was not so in the fields of Boaz. He came down there; and what did he say? Did he swear at them? Did he look at them in scorn and contempt? Did he say, "Get to work faster, now, or I will cut off your wages"? What did he say? "The Lord be with you." And they answered him, "The Lord bless thee." Here is the point I want to impress upon you in a plain and brief manner, and it seems to me that all of you who are preachers

need to preach on this: there is a certain respect and a certain decency that every man owes to those that work for him. And the men that employ ought to take the initiative in showing that respect. We don't have the old master-and-servant feeling in modern society, as Paul speaks of it, as the feeling in olden times portrayed as existing between Philemon and Onesimus, master and slave, owner and owned. We have voluntary service from those that work for us. The fact that it is voluntary only imposes upon those that employ more deeply the obligation to treat the employed with respect and consideration. I know a lady down in Philadelphia who has had thirteen servants in six days. One day she had four; one time she kept one for two days. She can't keep them; they come and go in a regular procession. I don't know what the matter is, but there is something wrong. If we were to get three students one day and lose three the next, and get two more the next day and lose them in a day or two, and so on, it would soon get into the heads of the people that something was wrong in our school.

I took my boy into the Sunday-school last fall down in the city. He was only in the class three minutes, when he came out, and stamped his foot, and said he was not going to stay there. I said, "What is the matter?" He said, "A little boy spit in my face." He was outraged; he would not go back. The conditions in that Sunday-school were such that we could not have harmony until we had removed the spitter. You will find that among employers and servants there is that feeling of friction and distrust. In society to-day every man is striving for the mastery. Whether a man works or employs others to work, the first thing he looks out for is himself. It is a selfish motive that drives him to plan for his own aggrandizement. "How much can I make out of this?" He makes just as much as he can make, and drives those that work for him just as far down as they will go without rebellion. We want the spirit of Christ in the hearts of the men that employ and the men who are

employed. We want each to be concerned for the welfare of the other; that each should surrender selfishness to an equitable adjustment of mutual rights; and that the man who puts his money into business should put it there for the good that he can do, instead of the amount of riches that he can accumulate.

When the London Company planted the Virginia settlement, down on the banks of the James, and founded the first English settlement in America, the London Company was made up of members of the Church of England. They were blessed of the King. And the first voyage that brought men to the settlement at Jamestown was a voyage that had been royally blessed by the Chief Bishop in the city of London. It was distinctly a religious exodus, for a distinctly religious purpose. And they were not over here two years until they had the notion that their only business was to shoot Indians and find gold. And from 1607 until 1622 they went through two massacres and a starving time and continuous misery, because they forgot the Christian purpose of the founding of the colony, and went in like greedy hogs to get as much as they could. They transported yellow clay from Virginia to London in the hope that it was gold; skinned every animal they could shoot down, and sold the skin to get rich. Then a great preacher, John Donne, stood up in St. Paul's, in London, and preached the first missionary sermon in the English language, telling those people that in the beginning God did not teach Noah how to build a boat in order that he might enrich himself, but that he might preserve himself; that, indeed, the whole industry of shipbuilding was revealed to man by God, to the end, not that men might send vessels to the remote corners of the earth to bring back riches to themselves, but that they might carry missionaries and Bibles and food to those that were in need in the uttermost parts of the earth; that the value of shipbuilding was to be measured, not by the riches that flowed back, but by the gospel that flowed out to heathen people.

We have lost such notions as that in this everyday life. A man puts his dollar into business because he believes that he can get a dollar and six cents out of it. He does not put his dollar in because he thinks he can honor God in that business. Yet here we have people going hungry. A woman came to my door the other day with tears in her eyes and said, "Please give me five cents to bury my baby." Hungry and ragged herself, she had a dead child in her home, and no money to bury it. Men who have money will keep it on interest in government bonds at three per cent, because they cannot trust their money to the uncertainties of the market.

Why don't you put your hundred dollars in trade? Because you are not certain it is going to return to you with usury. Rather than take the risk of loss, you will hold to what you have, and let the world starve. What we want is a philanthropy that will make men and women willing to sacrifice their money and labor for the sake of the comfort and cheer they can bring to others. And I don't know which would preach the better missionary sermon, the man that would stand in the pulpit and shout, or the man that would put his money into business and make others happy. If a man had a hundred dollars in his pocket this morning, and wanted to serve God, I don't know which way he would serve Him better—by putting his money into the market, or preaching a sermon in the pulpit. We must change the industrial outlook, and in some way or other produce a better feeling between the masses, before the world will be evangelized. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of harmony and good-will. It cannot prevail in a disturbed industrial society. There is a political aspect of the question that I have not time to comment upon this morning. I want simply to present the religious aspect of the question to you to think about. Boaz came out into his fields and spoke a blessing upon his reapers. And they looked up, and said in answer, "God be with you." This was a salutation that indicated mutual respect, mutual sympathy, mutual good-will. What would not those

reapers have done for Boaz if he had needed it? What would not he have done for them if they had needed his help? There was a bond between workman and employer, a bond that was deeper than the money bond. Those men were not earning a salary merely; they were working for love. You can ask me to do you a favor; you cannot hire me to do it. The best service I can render you is the service that is not for sale. When you make impossible the rendering of that better service, and drive men to a mere dollar-and-cent barter, you have immediately robbed men of the common basis upon which they can draw themselves together into strong brotherhood and into righteous relationship. "God bless you," he said; and they said, "God be with you." And he went through the field; and they were happy. Do you suppose they could work any harder, or not, after they did that? Did it make their burden easier or harder? The test of an overseer in any position in life, the test of a preacher over his church, the test of a teacher over his school, the test of a farmer over his workmen, the superintendent over his foundry, is this—does his presence lighten the work of those that are employed, or make it more grievous? You are a minister over a church; what is the result? Does it make it easier for every member to be a Christian, or does it make it harder? What is your relation to the men and women that are your flock? You are a teacher. Is it easier for your scholars to learn because you are their teacher, or is it a harder thing? The value of your work as a teacher is measured by this question. You are an overseer. Does your presence in the shop make the work of the men easier? Is your presence a source of help or a source of hindrance? That is a pretty hard question to answer. When I walk into my class-room and visit my pupils, is my presence a disturbance or a help? I am valuable in the proportion that I am helpful. I am not valuable if I am a disturbing influence. When you go before the people as a preacher, when you go into their homes, does your preaching and your visiting make



easier the life they are trying to live for Jesus Christ? That is what you are in the world for. That is what Boaz was trying to do for his servants—make their burdens and their work easier. What we need to study, all of us, is this: how can we make it easier for those around us to do right? As we make it easier for them to do right, we make it harder for them to do wrong. There was just such a relationship fostered between these people—the spirit of confidence and good-will that made the presence of the master a help and an inspiration to the laborer.

From the fifth to the seventh verse you have the picture of the stranger at the gate. We often sing that song, “Behold the stranger at the door.” Boaz in this scene down in the harvest field is typical of the blessed Christ himself. The steward or overseer in the field is the type of the minister in the church. Ruth is the type of the stranger that is brought into the church. Just think of Boaz as the Christ; of the man who answered Boaz, the superintendent or overseer in the field, as the minister or deacon in the church; and of Ruth as the type of the common member who has been brought in out of Moab. Then study these three characters, and you will see just about what your duty is. Boaz comes into the field like the Christ came into this world, breathing good-will and kindness and sympathy upon everything that He touched. What is his first word? A word of kindness to those who were working for him. Next he notices this damsel. “Who is this damsel?” Inquiring about the stranger that came from without, noticing everybody, giving to everybody a word of help and encouragement and good cheer. That was the work of Christ anticipated in the life of Boaz. The overseer answered back promptly to all the questions, and told the whole truth. He knew that Ruth was a stranger, and he gave the whole truth to Boaz when he asked about her. She is here, she is doing thus and so; giving you clearly the fact that the minister stands between Christ and his people, and has a two-fold duty—that of tell-

ing the truth to Christ and of knowing thoroughly everybody that works in Christ's fields. That is your duty. It will be a sad day for us that are preachers if anybody in the years to come shall stand up before the judgment bar and say, "No man cared for my soul, no man knew me in the world." People come into this chapel and sit down on a Sunday morning, and walk out, and nobody says a word to them. That is wrong. Ruth was noticed by the overseer, and also by Boaz himself. You have no idea what a tremendous responsibility rests upon the church that does not care to extend a word of welcome and pay attention to visitors that come into it.

What if God should come to-night and knock at your heart and say to you, "Who has been gleaning in my fields under your oversight?" and you would have to look up and say, "God, I know not." What a condemnation! What a comment upon the indifference of men who pretend to live for Christ, who are in his field reaping and gathering the harvest, and yet holding out no hand of welcome and no outlook or token to the stranger that comes to glean within the gates! Every time a man or woman comes inside the door of a church for the first time, every Christian present ought to pray to God that that one shall come continuously, and everything that you do ought to point toward that consummation. Who brought that person to church? Will you say that it was luck that he happened in—Ruth's luck? Or has God set his steps this way? And if we turn our faces away and talk to our friends and neglect the stranger, we simply put up the fences and shut out from Zion those whom God intended to be in. Who is going to answer for it? I know how easy it is, when church is over, to talk to a few friends whom you like; sometimes to only one, because you like the one; and it is your own personal satisfaction and selfish love that lead you to interfere with the whole cause of Christ. That is wrong. I would like to see more people of our church standing back at the door when the service is

over, saying a kind word to those that have come in. I want you to understand that Jesus Christ did not neglect anybody in the multitude. The very least pauper, the most miserable outcast that came to Him was seen of Him and helped. He knew no condition beneath His notice. There was no time in His blessed life when He could not turn aside and do good where good was needed. In our own lives, as we come to understand that, to take on more and more of that characteristic of Christ's life, will we come to understand the power that there is in sympathetic ministration to the wants of others. How are we treating the strangers at the gate? As Boaz regarded Ruth? Or are we, with cold indifference, allowing them to come and go, until, disappointed and disgusted and broken-hearted and cold and indifferent, they rise up and curse the church and go out into outer darkness? Boaz had no love for Ruth here, except the desire that he had as a Jew to do a Jew's duty. He was the type of the unselfish Christ doing the thing which he believed he was to do, and doing it with all the sympathy and tact and courtesy that came from a polished and cultured Christian soul. Some people don't talk because they think they don't know how to talk. If your heart is right, God will put the right word upon your lips. You need not worry about your grammar nor your rhetoric, about where your hands are when you talk. If your heart is right, God will shape the language to the hungry one and give the comfort that is needed. I want you to read carefully this Book of Ruth. I want you to think of Boaz as the type of the Christ that was to be, of Ruth as yourself coming into the new relationship in the church. In the light of that you will begin to see something of the grandeur and beauty which springs up here in this marvelous pastoral, this revelation of the coming of the Christ, this joyous prophecy of the majestic entrance of the King of kings into his reign of righteousness.

## LECTURE VI.

In the second chapter, at the seventh verse, you will find these words: "And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves; so she came and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house." Here is the picture of three characters—Boaz, the owner of the land; the steward or overseer; and Ruth, the gleaner. And these three, as I said previously, typify Christ, the minister of the gospel, and the man or woman who comes into the church of God. And as these three forces are at work in the church to-day, you will get by a careful study of the Book of Ruth from the beginning to the end, the picture of their right relationship to each other and to the church of Christ. You will see in the character of Boaz the spirit of the Christ and his work in the church. You will see in the attitude of this overseer, in his treatment of Boaz and his treatment of Ruth, the right relation of the minister to Christ on the one side, and his relation to the church on the other. And the character of Ruth will give us a pretty clear idea of how the soul comes out from Moab and enters into the land of promise, comes out of wrong and enters into right, comes out of darkness and enters into light, comes out of the world and enters into Christ's kingdom, a better understanding of our own lives, our relationship to the church, to the ministry of the church, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Note what follows: "Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: Let thine eyes be on the field that they do-reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Note carefully the conduct or behavior of Ruth. In the

first place, she was an industrious girl. The world has no need of any other kind. An idle, worthless, lazy, indolent girl—what does she amount to? The young man who is a shirker, whose motto is, not how much, but how little can I do and get on in this world, is not worthy of a place in this world nor fit to go into any other. In the next place, she was a modest girl. She was not a loud-mouthed, blatant character. In a quiet, modest way she did the work that God had laid upon her, although she did not know that it was the Lord's hand was directing her. I speak of her modesty because it seems to me to-day, more and more, that young people need to learn lessons of modesty. And by modesty I mean a spirit of subordination of ourselves to our elders, a right respect to the history of the past as it has been made, a right surrender to old and established customs and the experience which the revelation of God has put into this world for young men and women to stand by, the history of superior experience and higher knowledge. To set ourselves up above and superior to these things is, to say the least, an exceedingly immodest thing. Yet how often young people are apt to need the rebuke that Paul was obliged to utter against those to whom he wrote, "Some of you have not the knowledge of God, I say this to your shame." Some of you have ignored the past, your father's advice, your mother's counsel, your brother's kindly interest; you have forgotten what your minister taught you, what your teacher said to you; you have set up yourselves as knowing more than all these; you are trying to sow in fields that have been condemned, and where, if you do sow, you will gather only the whirlwind and destruction. You think you know even more than the wisdom of the past. You go on repeating the follies of yesterday, whereas, if you were to sit down and study the wisdom and experience of the past, you would live better. It takes a modest person to do that, one that is willing to profit by the counsels of others. One of the marks of that great preacher, Brother Quinter, one of the greatest in his

generation, one of his peculiarities from his boyhood, as related in his biography, is that he enjoyed the company of older men. He did not dictate to them, but in meekness and submission he listened to what the elders of the church had to say, and then tried to profit by it. Thus he rose to a high position in the church long before many others who set aside the traditions of the church and the advice of the elders, and had to learn, after years of bitter experience, that they were wrong.

The modest spirit of Ruth showed from the time she entered the field of Boaz. She did not have to be knocked down and beaten into sense. She had learned to surrender herself and to be a fit vessel for the Master's use. That is what we all need, more and more, in this world to-day. There are some that get the idea—many young people do—that they have become smart, smarter than anybody else that ever lived. They go out asserting this superior knowledge, arguing with those older and wiser than themselves, setting themselves up in high places, doing the thing which Christ condemned others for doing, "sitting in Moses' seat." Many of them want to do that. What God needs to-day is a multitude of young people in their teens—thirteen, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen—who are willing to go like Ruth into the fields of Christ and glean for the privilege of being there, that after a while they may be maidens of His and sons of His and adopted into the church itself. Another thing I call your attention to in the character of this wonderful woman, Ruth. She knew how to talk. She had good manners. She was courteous. If you read all through this book, you will find no single word that fell from her lips that was immodest or discourteous to anybody. Anybody whose spirit is right and whose heart is sweet is a courteous person. If you affect to be other than your heart is, you are going to be discourteous at some time or other; you can't help it. Here, then, you see that the courtesy of the woman shows that her heart and her life were right in the sight of God.

I call your attention, young girls, to the place where Boaz found Ruth. You know, if you have read on to the end of this, he married her. Boaz found Ruth in the harvest field at work—the best place under the sun to find a woman. More than that, Ruth found Boaz down in his own field, looking after his own business—working. That is the best place to find a husband, a wife. Now, a few things to beware of. In the first place, beware of a woman who is a gadder. Do you know what a gadder is? A woman that runs around and talks more than she knows; and who spreads a flame of gossip through the community; and sets the church on fire with maliciousness; and destroys the power of God's kingdom and the possibility of his righteousness in the earth. Young men are not worth anything who gad or gossip. You know we always have in this school what we call the tail end of the procession. We organize our school and we start you all in alike. In the course of two weeks some of our students stand close to the faculty and government of the school. They stand up high in the procession. They are the students who, by their inherent worth, have won the respect of the institution. Then it gradually moves downward, until somebody is at the other end of the line. Beware of those that stand low down in the procession. It does not matter what procession it is. It is infinitely better for you to marry some one who is first class in something than seventh class in something else. You had better live with a first-class farmer than a fifth-class preacher. You have the authority of the Bible for that. Every man ought to excel in something, stand well in something. It is on the basis of our best things that our affiliations ought to be made, for then we are held strongest to our best. Beware of a slothful woman. That is a polite word for laziness. Ruth was an industrious woman. Beware of a lazy person. Think of a woman in a home who is lazy, who allows the cobwebs to grow on the ceiling, the dust to multiply on the dishes—carelessness, sloth, ignorance and filth fostered by her in the

home. What sooner drives a man to drink and distraction than that! If I could walk up through your rooms this afternoon, as I have done in the past, and see how you live, I could write on your door my judgment of the kind of home you will have. Beware of sloth. Never think you can marry and live with a young man who has been lazy for a year, but who is going to get to work and work hard for you just because he is yours. That is the worst mistake on earth. If he is too lazy to work to get you, he will be lazier still to work for you when he gets you. The man who is not zealous to get into the kingdom of heaven, who is too lazy to go to church, too lazy to pray, too lazy to gather his family around him in the morning for prayers, too lazy to open his Bible and explain it to his children, too lazy to go to the Sunday-school, too lazy to think about the missionary cause, too lazy to read the church paper when it comes into his home, is not working hard enough to win heaven.

Another thing beware of. Beware of a sloppy companion. I don't know how Ruth was dressed, but if I were to picture her down there in the field in her poverty, in her rags, I would paint her with a neatness that was the index of the life that she was living, and that showed in her whole manner and expression. Beware of any young person in this world who speaks against his own parents. I sat one day in a street-car. It was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where you would expect better things. In the car was a professor in Harvard University, talking to a young woman. I could not avoid hearing the conversation. And as this professor was a prospective tutor of mine, my curiosity was aroused to study him. I listened to what he was saying. Among other things, his conversation drifted to his home. He said: "I had good, honest parents. My mother was an honest woman. My father was gentlemanly enough, as such things go. But, you know, they were not the kind of people you would care to meet." I never went into his class. Beware of those that speak slightly of the mother that nursed them through



sickness and pain and distress; of the father who provided for them when they were little and helpless. Beware of the ingratitude that is stamped upon every expression of disrespect to father and mother. I do not mean by this that you should be clannish and disguise the truth. There may be things in your family line that you are not specially proud of. Keep your mouth shut about them. I don't mean that you shall go out and lie about them and praise them inordinately. I simply ask that you speak respectfully of them when you do speak; and when you have not that kind of thing to say, to remain silent. I don't know what kind of a father Ruth had out in heathen Moab, nor the kind of a mother that bore her in that heathen land. But they certainly had something of the spirit of righteousness in them afar off, for they taught their daughter good sense. In spite of all this affliction upon her, she never uttered a word of reproach or rebuke against anybody. She simply felt; but she spoke nothing. Silence is golden sometimes. Consider the charity and devotion of a young man to his home. I would not live with anybody, nor would I have anything to do with anybody, that had not enough respect for his ancestors to keep that in mind.

There is another characteristic of her. Beware of anybody that hates to do home work. You know, nowadays, it is stylish for women to be doctors and lawyers and school teachers and members of Twentieth Century Clubs and editors of magazines that teach other people how to do things. In fact, a sort of notion prevails that women ought to do anything but the thing they ought to do. When you select one for life, you had better choose one that knows how to run a home, whether she knows how to run a newspaper or not. You had better live with one that understands the routine of a day's living in the house than one that knows how to make a stump speech on questionable politics. She may not be so brilliant with her tongue, but she will be infinitely more helpful in her life. Think about these things.

Some of you will get caught with outward show. It is genuine worth that counts. Many a young man does foolish and inconsiderate things because he is not fair even to himself. If you would write down on a piece of paper the attributes in life that you love, that you could live with, that you could ask God's blessing upon, they would not at all fit the person you like best. What is the matter here? You are not true to your better self. You are caught in the mazes of some trick. Now, here was Ruth, at work in the wheat field, gathering up the sickled grain, doing the routine of manual service, wearing in her act the badge of beggary, and doing it all with a grace, with a submission, with a devotion that made her famous throughout the land, and won for her as husband the best man in Bethlehem, and one of the best in the world, no doubt, in that day.

How did he care for her? In the first place, he did not deprive her of the respect that was hers because she was a toiler. That is, he honored her in her work. He did not say, "Why, Ruth, I am astonished to see you down here at that kind of thing. Get out of here and go up to the house. I will give you a better place." He finds her in an honest place, where she had a right to be under the laws of God. He recognizes that right, and simply tries to make easy her work in that place. Do you remember when Christ came and found men fishing, and called out to them from the shore, "What have you got?" They said nothing; they had been fishing without Him. And he said, "Cast your net on the other side." Why didn't He say, "If you have not caught anything, quit fishing, and we will go into the lumber business or something else in which we can make some money"? Stick to your fishing, and with His help it will pay. Cast your net on the other side; but cast your net.

God does not call people out of their places in life into others. He simply glorifies them in the place where they are. If you are a farmer, you will farm all the better because you have joined the church of Jesus Christ. You

don't have to quit farming because you have joined the church. If you are anything that is right—a fisherman, a gleaner, a workman of any sort whatever, anywhere, you can exalt that place by taking the grace of God into your heart and living a Christian life in that place. God does not transform us from place to place, but he transforms our life that it may glorify the place where he finds us, teaching us to be content with the thing we are doing, if we are doing it as well as we can. Here Boaz found her, a simple, modest, honest, courteous woman, gleaning. He said: "Glean on. I will make it easier for you to do the work."

In the second place, his concern was genuine. It was not affected politeness. He did not say one thing and mean another, as the half of us do when we talk to each other. It was a genuine concern, a sincere concern. It was the kind of sincerity that an honest man always displays when he comes into touch with honest people—no gloss, no veneer, no varnish, just the truth. He tells her frankly what he has learned. Again his concern was thorough. He was not concerned in her age alone, nor in the color of her eyes, as an idle curiosity. He was concerned in her life. What is the use of our tripping around among each other trying to find out little eccentricities of character? Why don't we know each other's lives? When we ask questions, why don't we get to the heart of the matter? A man comes into church, and you go to him and say, "I am glad you came to church to-night." That is all right in its way. But it is so outsidish, so far from the central thing that you might have said, so remote from the touch of life with which Christ would have spoken. Here is a good question for you to ask when you meet a man who comes into church or into your life companionship. Ask this question of yourself: How would Christ meet that person if he were in my place? And, knowing how He would do, do that way yourself. It was a thorough concern, as well as a genuine one. It was a helpful concern; it was a protective concern.

It was—what shall I say? I know no word to characterize it. It was a provisional concern—that is, he provided for her. He made her rewards greater than she could have made them herself. She gleaned more because Boaz was helping than she could have gleaned alone. He enriched her. And she gleaned how much? “It was about an ephah of barley.” She gleaned as much as she could carry; loaded down away beyond the ordinary gleanings because Boaz made it easier for her to glean, provided for her in her gleanings. There is a lesson here. The spirit of all things is the spirit of giving, not of withholding. To store up is an anomaly in Nature; it is unusual, it is a remarkable thing. To give is to be like Nature, to give is to be like God. He gave her more than she could gather of herself, typifying, it seems to me, in a most remarkable way, a remarkable fact of life. When you come in touch with my life, you have one solemn duty—to make it richer than it could have been without you. When I come in touch with yours, I have one solemn duty—to make it better than it could have been without me. To make it worse is sin. To leave it untouched is impossible. To make it better is to do what Christ did. Boaz was a type of the Christ because he enriched her life. Even in temporary things she was the gainer by his aid and co-operation, teaching us, if we had time to press the thought to a conclusion, that the best partnerships of life are those in which Christ is a party; that the greatest gains in this world come when we work with God, and not against Him.

Verse ten points out a grateful heart. Here again her deep and touching humility shows itself in the words: “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, \* \* \* seeing I am a stranger?” She had been favored, and she did not do what some girls would do if favors were shown to them from a sincere heart—walk away and never return thanks. She showed the gratitude of her heart for the favor that she received. I saw a woman come into a street-car the other day. A man got up and offered his seat to her. She sat

down and took it just as a pig would take an ear of corn from a man. Ruth, from Moab, the land of the heathen, would not do that. She "fell on her face" and expressed the gratitude of her heart to her benefactor. You can afford always to stand in the place of help long enough to thank the helper. The old Greeks could tarry long enough to build their triumphal monuments on the fields where victory came to them. We stop on the field of conquest to build monuments of triumph and express our gratitude and praise. As you come down the River Rhine and enter the first narrows almost opposite the Mouse Tower, on the borders of France, but on German soil, is that magnificent Denkmal, the great national monument that commemorates the triumphs of the armies under Bismarck and Frederick in 1870. It stands on the very outposts of the German Empire. It was placed where they were helped in their conquest—put up as a token of their gratitude. When a German comes down the Rhine, his hat goes off and tears fill his eyes, and he sings "The Watch on the Rhine." He has the patriotic gratitude of hearts that recognize the place where they have been helped. Some of us have been helped of God in the church; we have been restored from sickness, we have been made prosperous; we have been saved from great temptation and sin; we have been delivered time and time again by God's interposition; and we have not one single Ebenezer up, not one. That is the most ungrateful thing that I can think of.

There is in the Old Testament this ringing question: "Will a man rob God?" Of course you will answer, No. But I ask you this afternoon, if God has helped you here and you have never blessed him for it, "Will a man rob God?" Has not a man robbed God? You can say to yourselves that if you have given a man a dollar, and he comes and hands it back, there is no special reason why you should thank him for the return of the dollar. You come into my room and say, "I would like to borrow your book." You keep it a week

or two and bring it back, and say to me, "I am much obliged." We have come to feel that when we have done a favor, and the favor flows back to us, we owe no thanks for it. The man who gets a favor thanks, but the man who did the favor does not thank. But you can't hide behind such an argument as that. You have never done anything for God worth speaking about; He has done everything for you. He has sent His Son into the world for you. What have you done for Him in comparison? He sends His Holy Spirit to quicken your hearts and lead you to holiness; He gives you all that; He keeps pressing it upon you. We are all open to the charge of base ingratitude. We are not grateful. Some of you will go down in a few minutes to the table and bow your heads, and not even thank God for the food you eat. You will think about some foolish thing instead. You will go into prayer-meeting and kneel because you have to, out of respect to your associates; out of respect to God you do nothing. Some of you go to church and take part in the services because it is expected, simply because you want to conform to what is naturally expected of you. You don't think of the duty you owe to God in singing a hymn, in uttering a prayer, in praying for the preacher, in listening to the sermon, in speaking to the visitor and stranger in the church. This is how you can express your gratitude to God. If He has ever blessed you, give a glass of cold water to a pauper. If He has ever blessed you, give in His name a blessing of your own to those that need it; for "When you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto me." He will write it down in the book the right way. What is the lesson? Let us all try to glorify Him more and more. A heart of gratitude, a grateful heart, is a great heart, a large heart, an enlarging heart, a heart fuller and fuller of love and gratitude to God.

## LECTURE VII.

If, in your school life, the teacher has given you help, has been an aid to you in making more of your life than you could have made of it without aid, you owe that teacher your gratitude, and ought to express it. It is a type of how all your life ought to be ordered. It seems to me that life, after all, when it is rightly lived, is but a series of expressions of gratitude. If we come to look at it aright, we don't live an hour in which we cannot be helped by somebody in some way. A man's life ought to be a constant thanksgiving. We ought to do what the Bible commands, "Pray without ceasing, giving thanks always." Whoever does not do that is a miserly, ungrateful whelp. He has closed up the fountains of his gratitude. He has lived in this world without knowing what it is to live aright. He is false to God, and he can never grow. Over in Marblehead, Massachusetts, an old sailor, drunk, staggered into a church and heard a sermon. The sermon sobered him. The prayer service at the close of the sermon converted him. He went out of that a converted man, anxious to join the church and do right. On his way home he got to thinking about this: "Tough old soul that I am, I went down there drunk to have a good time, and here I am converted. Who did all this for me? How changed I am! Why, my God did this for me; it is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just think of what he has done for me to-night! He shall never hear the last of it." That is the right spirit; never going to let Him hear the last of it. As long as he lived he was going to keep saying his thanksgiving for that converting power in his life. If some of you had been converted, you would have hung your head and slunk away like a dummy. You would never have given thanks in the church, nor in the prayer-meeting; never spoken anything to any one about it.

I read the other day of an old man in a little town, who went down to the post office. A little girl was giving out the letters. They had been having a big revival in the town, and she was very much interested in it. The old man went over to the fire to warm himself, and inquired for his mail. The little girl brought the conversation around to the subject of the revival service. She said, among other things, "Several of us have been wishing in our hearts that you would be converted and join the church." And he said, "Why, Miss, I have been a member of the church for forty years." She said: "I beg your pardon. I would not have spoken like that, but I never saw you in Sunday-school; I never saw you in the prayer-meeting; I never saw you take any active part in the church; I did not know you were a church member." The old man went home and called his wife to him and said: "Mam, I guess I have not been much of a Christian. My name has been on the church records, but down in the post office they did not know I was a member of the church. There is something wrong here. We have got to go to church more, and do more when we are there." I wonder whether the world is not full of people who never let it be known that they are members of the church. They keep a tight lid down on that fact, with a sealed rim, for fear it would break out some time and somebody make the discovery. What does the Bible say about that? "Let your light shine." You must not stick it under a bushel, hide it away.

Again, don't refuse help when it is offered to you. That is a species of self-pride. You get the idea that you are pretty strong, you are pretty able, a pretty good fellow, you can go it alone. A man comes along; he offers you a kindness. No, you don't need it; you are going to get along; you don't want any help. Strike that kind of a keynote of absolute independence, and you soon run against a snag. You must learn early in life that we are all dependent; none of us are independent. To know how to receive help is as important as to know how to give help. Not to receive help is



to be tremendously narrow and handicapped in the work of life. Every man around you can help you if you are willing to be helped. Every person in the community can strengthen you if you feel the need of help. Think of the candor of this woman. Her consciousness of need, her absolute surrender to every feeling of reserve, led her to speak right out from the heart the feeling that prompted her. "Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" We are not always as direct and plain and specific as we ought to be. Ruth sets a good example here for us all to tell the truth in plain language, right to the point; to be just as specific as we can be in everything we do—in preaching, teaching, talking, in everything. There is a great deal of time wasted in this world in glittering generalities. It seems to me that the candor of Ruth, indicative as it is of a pure heart, is a type of the kind of thing we ought to be in the Christian life in the church. We ought to be honest, open, frank and candid with everybody. Say just what you ought to say, and do what you say.

What was Ruth grateful for? I suppose there are some of you around here who would say, "If I could gain all that Ruth did, I would be grateful too; but I don't get much." Ruth, out there in the fields of Boaz, obtained a beggar's portion, no more. She got just what a man did here the other day. He came and knocked at the door and asked for something to eat, and my neighbor's wife gave him something to eat. He got just what a beggar gets. That is all Ruth got. She went out there to get a beggar's portion; she received only that, and was grateful for it. There is not one of you that has not that much, that has not more than Ruth received. There is not one of you that has been as grateful. In comparison with her you are not to be considered. Your ingratitude, your lack of appreciation has made it impossible for God to do with you and for you what he did with Ruth

and for Ruth. You put yourself out of the line, and God cannot use you until you get your heart softened and your whole spirit aroused and your whole will bent on doing something that is right, doing all of it that you can. In the course of this conversation, if you will notice as the story goes on, Boaz answers Ruth and approves her course. You cannot keep a fact very well hid. Ruth could slip out there in the morning into the wheat field and glean, and slip back into the house at night undiscovered. She could keep quiet and stay in during the evening. But in spite of all that, the kind of a life she was living out there in Bethlehem, the kind of devotion that she was showing to her old mother-in-law, the kind of absolute trust in the new God she had come to worship, had gone up as a memorial, not only to heaven, but out as a memorial among men. Boaz knew of it: "And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore." You can't hide these things. Here is the trouble: so many of us are so anxious to have known the good we are doing that we don't get enough done to amount to anything. You need not mind putting it in the newspaper or telling it abroad that you gave a turkey to the orphans' home or a bushel of coal to a sick neighbor. Just do these things, and don't boast of it. After a while you will be doing enough of them that the newspapers and the world and heaven shall ring with the knowledge of it. You can't keep it back. But if you try to get it noised abroad and have it boasted about, you will waste all your time on that—time that ought to have been given to the doing of good things. And you will appear in the light of the world as the hypocrite that you are. Ruth never bothered interviewers, never tried to make herself popular. She simply attended to business. There is nothing great in what she did. She had the most subordinate place

that I can conceive in the whole Jewish order of the family, the support of an old mother-in-law in poverty. But she did that so well that the fame of it went out all over the country.

Some of you want a reputation after a while. You want to be known as preachers, as teachers, as mathematicians; you want to be known as this and that. If you want to have such a reputation, the best procedure in the world is to do the thing you want to be with all your might. If you want to be a mathematician, figure, cipher away, day and night. And when you become a good mathematician the world will learn of it. If you want to be a good teacher, study the laws of teaching, the laws that govern the growth of the child's mind and spirit; and as you come to know these things, and become expert in your knowledge, you can teach; and the world will find it out. Some of you want to be good musicians and play on the piano. That is a laudable ambition. I wish you all could play. But you fritter and waste more time away in talking about what you do than it would require to do the thing. The tendency of human life is to dissipate energy. You hang around for sympathy, saying, "How I would like to do this!" You need somebody to say, "Why don't you do it?" You want comfort and support. Your duty is to do the thing unaided and with all your might. Hoe your own row in the potato patch. Do your own work, and do it with such simple devotion to the work itself that God will see your devotion in that and make it a memorial to you and glorify your name later on. A noble life is always found out. If you do good for no reward, you get a reward; if you do good for a reward, you seldom get it, and never deserve it. When you trust in God as Ruth did, there will be great compensation. Your rewards will always be as great, and greater, than you can conceive them to be. I like, above all things in this part of the narrative, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

“Under whose wings thou art come to trust.” I would like if every member of this class could take that closing part of the prayer of Boaz, the benediction that he pronounces upon the life of this simple maiden, and think it out for himself. “Under whose wings thou art come to trust!” He simply asks for the blessing of God upon her, a blessing from the power in whom she had come to trust. That means so much when you consider its full significance. Here in God she had a place of refuge. She had a place of shelter under his wings. There was shelter for her soul. There was refuge for her weary spirit. Here was the tender, mature and cultured sympathy of a father’s soul for this poor orphan girl. What could be more beautiful than the figure of the Almighty’s sheltering wing over this orphan beggar! She had no home of her own; she had no one to care for her; she was absolutely alone and lonely. In her loneliness and aloneness she comes to find shelter and refuge under the wings of Almighty God. She is not disappointed any more than you will be disappointed if you come to trust in the same protection. Sheltered under His wings, protected by His love, sheltered from everything by the interposition of His divine power! God does protect us. Blessed assurance! “Under whose wings thou art come to trust.” Let us learn how we come to trust under his wings. We might be under God’s wings, restless as a chicken is restless under the mother’s wing. We might be under His wing, fearful, fretful, murmuring, unsatisfied, discontented, chafing and fussing. We might not be at ease, not at rest. There are a great many people to-day who are in exactly that condition. Let us come to trust under his wings. And when we come to the point of trust, past all other states of mind, states of discontent and restlessness and fearfulness and murmuring, when we have come to the point that we can nestle down under the wing of God and trust, then we shall be under His wing resting; we shall be under it fearless; we shall be under it contented. When you are under God’s wing

without fear, without any desire to escape from there, filled with the desire to stay there, when you are under God's protection and want to stay there, then your life is capable of infinite power and infinite good.

In this connection think of old Job, a character that I am very fond of. You remember that when he crept under God's wing and felt strong there, and above all felt at home under God's wing, when the storm came and drove his cattle asunder and killed them, and the winds came and blew the house down over the heads of his children and his sons were killed, what did he do? He could go on praising God. Without His protection he would have gone wild. But he sat under God's wing through all trials, saying, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." When you can get your life keyed up to the point where you can feel that under God's protection every loss that comes to you is a thing for which you can bless God; when you can surrender everything that is precious to you in life and still hold on to God; then your soul is anchored to the right spot. When the loss of a house, or the loss of a cow, or a farm, or anything, breaks you away from your moorings to God, you simply love those things more than you love God. That was not the way with old Job. His religion meant more to him than his children, so he could lose his children and stick to his religion. His religion meant more to him than his property. He could see that go, and sit down in beggary and rags and be content, because his religion was above his herds and flocks, and above the children of his youth. I fear very much that some of you are not very well anchored. There are certain things you could lose, of course. You could lose your pocketbook and not fret much; you could still go to prayer-meeting and pray. And yet I don't know about that. It might depend upon how much money you had in it! How much of your money could you lose and still be undisturbed in your religious devotion? I was talking the other day to a good

friend of mine, who is a prominent man in the eastern part of the state in school affairs. He lost his property about two years ago. He was sold out by the sheriff. He said to me: "I want to tell you that I have been a member of the church for twenty-five years; but when I saw my goods go, I don't want to say what I did, but you know sometimes a body begins to doubt the providence of God." "Yes," I said, "I know how that is." He said: "I was just in that fix; I felt as if things were not right, after all. Of course I knew it was not right to do that, but I was doing it all the same." There he was, just tottering, his goods and his God about equally balanced, his love for each about equally strong. When one went, he was not sure that he could hold the other. Here is the test for all of us. If we come to trust in God more than we come to trust in other things, then we can lose the other things and still hold on to God, "under whose wings we have come to trust." Let us come to trust. Don't get half-way to trust. Don't get a half-trust in your life, a half-faith, a half-expectation, a half-certainty. Come right up to the full measure of all the trust will give to you. What are you doing to get that? You must surrender your whole self, give up everything—everything that you are, everything that you think you are, everything that you want to be. You can't trust under God's wings and be sheltered there unless you are full of God—entirely unselfish in your outlook and purposes. I remember Christ's promise; I will paraphrase it for you: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will put you under this wing of protection, I will take your burdens from you, I will take your heavy sins from you, I will give you what you need, I will give you rest. But to do so, you must come unto me, all the way unto me, not half-way. Let us come to trust under His wings.

Ruth expresses her gratitude for this ministry of love that was showered upon her, in the thirteenth verse. I want to

impress upon all of you the value of a word of gratitude timely uttered, the value of a grateful word. Sometimes you feel as if you ought to say something to somebody who had done some kindness to you—as if you ought to say to the pastor: “That was a good sermon; it did me good; I thank you for it.” “That was a good meeting we had together.” But you don’t say it; you walk out with the mean, miserly feeling that you have not done your duty. I don’t want anybody to come to me and lie to me, and say, “You did well,” when I did not. I don’t care for that; but in the touch of life, when you are helped you ought to say “Thank you.” There ought to be that feeling of confidence and mutual respect for one another that prompts one to say, with full heart, “Thank you.” And when you learn to be a grateful church and a grateful people, you will be more like Christ. In one of Mr. Moody’s great meetings in Sheffield, England, a woman came into his church an hour before the service with a baby in her arms. The very fact that she came early showed her interest. She wanted to get a good seat. She sat down about the middle of the church. Mr. Moody came in and noticed this woman. The baby was crying, as babies will in church. Just wait until you are a preacher. I would like you to be a preacher for five minutes when a baby is yelling at the top of his voice, that you might learn how trying it is to preach under such circumstances. Here was Mr. Moody before this great congregation. He felt the burden of souls and the responsibility of the meeting upon him. And between him and that congregation of dying sinners was this crying baby. Some of the people looked at the woman. She was trying to quiet the baby, of course; but the more she tried to quiet it, the more it cried. Some of the people looked at her as if to say: “Why don’t you take it away? Get out of this,” as I have often seen people look at a woman with a crying baby. If I were in church with a child, and were to be so looked at, I would take it out, and unless I were very strongly centred in my religious convictions, I

would never go back to that church again. Finally the woman started to go out, but Mr. Moody said: "Will somebody kindly tell that woman to come back and take her place and not worry if the baby does cry? My voice is strong, and by the grace of God I can preach as loud as that baby can cry." The mother was comforted; she came back, and the baby went to sleep. And the message of God was preached from that pulpit with power. That woman's heart was touched, and when Mr. Moody said, "All that want the prayers of God's people, please stand up," she stood up. When he said, "Those that desire to learn more about the way of salvation will please tarry after the meeting is over and meet me in the little back room yonder," the woman got up and started for the little room. And a large man back in the congregation, who had not had a baby in his arms for fifty years, perhaps, came up and said to this woman, "Let me hold your baby while you go into the room yonder." He was a royal knight! He took that strange woman's baby in his arms and toted it up and down the aisles of the church, and she went into that little side room and wrestled with God until she received the gift of the Holy Spirit. You are not grateful enough. You are not on the outlook for a chance to say a kind word when a kind word ought to be said. We turn our backs to one another and walk on the other side, and the world seems cold and hard and selfish and unyielding. Perhaps the reason for it is, we have been cold and selfish and unyielding ourselves in our contact with others.

You generally find the world just. It will usually give back to you about what you give to it. Here was a woman who gave expression to her gratitude. She realized that Boaz had been good to her, and she did not hesitate to express her thanks; though some girls would have said it was not modest of her to say, "Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord." Well, it was an expression of her honest heart, sweeping outward toward her benefactor. Boaz comes and does the



thing this woman needs; he helps her; so the Lord Jesus Christ comes into your life and mine to help it. What we need is to be more grateful, and to express more freely our gratitude. Ruth's heart opened like a flower that had been kept in the shade, and now for the first time in years had received the warm light of the sun of helpfulness. Her life opened to take on new hopes as it unfolded under the influence of this unexpected kindness. She exalted him just as we exalt our great benefactors. You know how we exalt Columbus. Why do we do that? How did he get into history? Why do we speak about him and have his anniversaries? He was a benefactor. He did something that helped you, and now you are trying to pay back your gratitude. We build our monuments to George Washington. What is it for? He was our benefactor. That is, he did in advance for us what we now endeavor in return to pay to him by building monuments and holding anniversary days and reciting his name in schools. That is the spirit of gratitude in a practical form. Washington shall live as long as our nation lives, in memory of the benefits he bestowed upon our nation. It is so with any great man. Napoleon, as much as he was maligned and abused, as much as he oppressed others, was sincerely loved by his soldiers. The spirit of devotion that characterized the grenadiers that marched under Napoleon typifies in some measure the devotion that ought to be felt in our following of Christ. There was a little German poem recited once in this church. It told the story of Napoleon's army retreating from Moscow. Two grenadiers were captured and thrown into prison. After being imprisoned for months in Russia, they found their way out of jail and across the border into Germany. When they got as far as Germany on their way home to join the forces of the Emperor, they were told that Napoleon had been arrested and taken in exile to the little island of Elba, and was there a prisoner for life; that he had been banished from the French nation. Then these soldiers who had fought with him and

had fought for him began to discuss their future. And one said to the other: "Why should I go back to France, to flowery, sunny France, when the Emperor is gone—the Emperor, the Emperor! You go back; you have wife and children three; go, minister to them. I shall lie down here on the Rhine and die for my Emperor—the Emperor." The other replied: "What care I for wife, what care I for children; take my life here on the Rhine, and bury me with my sword in my hand, the badge of the Cross of Honor on my breast, and when my Emperor rides over my grave, I shall rise from this tomb with my sword in my hand to fight for my Emperor—the Emperor!" This is the devotion of an absolute follower to a leader whom he loves. It mirrors, it seems to me, something of the devotion that men and women need more and more for the meek and lowly King and Leader of us all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You are not willing to lie down with your sword in your hand; you are not willing to stand girded for the fray; you are not willing to die for your King. The test of real discipleship is the test that Christ himself put upon us when he gave his life for us. Over in Denmark some years ago they were building a little church, and about forty feet from the ground a workman slipped and fell to the pavement below. It looked like instant death. But a flock of sheep were going past at the time. The workman fell on the flock of sheep and crushed a little lamb to death, but saved his own life. Up there from where he fell they carved on the side of that church a picture of the little lamb that had given its life for him, as a memorial of the sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ was crushed by the weight of your sins, crushed down to death. And you have not exalted him as they exalted this little lamb of Denmark because it saved the life of a workman. Let us hold him up as a leader, as an exalted King. Let us worship him and follow him with a feeling of gratitude and devotion, with an honest heart genuinely devoted to Christ.

## LECTURE VIII.

You will find recorded in the fourteenth verse: "And Boaz said unto her, At meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left." Let us think a little about the mid-day meal down there in the harvest field. It is interesting to know that these men who worked honestly through the morning hours had their meals served to them at the place where they were. The question of food was subordinate to the question of industry. The place of labor was the place of nourishment. Everything else had to be tributary to the one thing, the place of labor. They did not abandon the field and go off to the town and waste an immense amount of the day's labor and of their own energy in gaining sustenance at noon-time. They sat down and ate, and were sufficed, and left—returned again to the field to work. If we take this harvest field as the field of God, for such it was to Ruth; and if we take Ruth as a type of all of us, for such she was; we have a lesson before us. There are times in the life of each of us when meal-time comes, when the time of recuperation comes, the time of restoration, the time for strengthening for additional labors. These men could not work on throughout the day. The limit of endurance had been reached. Nourishment and replenishing of their energies was necessary. The preacher of the word of God will run out in the course of time if he does not keep attending to the meal-times of his life. Some of you have not enough in you to feed anybody; you don't "meal-time" often enough. You miss opportunities in the public sanctuary to feed yourself that you may feed others. You miss opportunities in the prayer-meeting, in the Sabbath-

school, for that sort of thing. You miss the opportunity that is in the Bible Session of the college for that sort of thing. These are the meal-times of the Christian. These are the times that you sit down to strengthen yourself for additional toil and work in God's field. To miss these is to go out weak for all the work of your lives. No man, who has sincerely resolved to work for Jesus Christ, can afford to miss the means of strengthening himself for that work. He can't afford to turn his back upon any time when he can be strengthened for that work. The church service, the prayer-meeting service, the Bible Session, these are the means that God has provided for filling your soul with the food of heaven, in the strength of which you are to withstand temptation and sin, and to work for God for many days. Without that strength you will break down under temptation and be ineffective in the field. Some people say, "I cannot afford to go up to the Bible term for three weeks; my potatoes will freeze in the cellar, my horse will not be fed as well by the man who will attend to him as I would feed him myself." But you forget. If you don't come, you are going to starve your soul, and are not going to feed properly your congregation. Let your potatoes freeze. Let your horse be neglected for a time. Attend to the souls of God's children. We don't understand these things right sometimes. These are our meal-times. To miss these is to impoverish our souls. I do wonder how lean some of us are, how flabby we are, how weak we are. No wonder the world and God himself get discouraged at the work we do. We are so weak we cannot strike a solid blow for Jesus Christ. We have not prayed enough, we have not pondered enough, we have not strength enough to do the work. It is one of my notions that a man had better sit for forty years and think and prepare just to strike one good square blow for Christ, than to scatter his energies over forty years and do little or nothing for Him.

I believe in thorough preparation, I believe in absolute

skill. I believe in the perfecting of yourself for the work of Christ. I cannot conceive of anything in this world that needs the best energies of a man as much as the work of Christ needs it. Let us try to bring men and women as near to that standard as we can. There is a man in your congregation you think can preach. He shows evidences of spiritual growth. Send him to school where he can get the best spiritual strength and food, so that he can come back to you in ten years and strike a blow in that community for Christ that will send sin reeling to its death and sinners rejoicing to the cross. You will have sacrificed your time and money to send him to school. But the joy of standing where he knocks sin dead, and rejoicing with him over the conquest, is ample compensation. You do not loan a dollar to a young man to go to school for fear you will not get the dollar back. To lend a dollar to a young man to go to a Christian school is redeeming the world for Christ. We need young men in the ministry who can preach with spirit, with power. We need them right here in Huntingdon, out at New Enterprise, down in Virginia, over in New York, we need them over the entire Brotherhood— young men filled with the spirit of Christ, the holy spirit of God, and who are educated until they can preach with power. We need them. And mark my words, unless we rear them in our colleges, we won't have them. The school of the church is the nursery in which this is done. It is the meal-place for the strengthening of men for the work of God. To keep them out is to impoverish God's field and let it go unworked, unredeemed. One cannot help holding up his hands and praying to Heaven, saying, "How long, O Lord, how long!" There is another meal-time for you and for me—the sacred ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ. These are the feasting-times of the Christian man and the Christian woman. What is the significance of the ceremonies in the church, of the ceremonies that are precious to life, excepting that they are the times when the soul is fattened before God? Why do we com-

memorate the shed blood and broken body of the Lord Jesus Christ in the communion service? Why do we commemorate his humility in the ordinance of feet-washing? Why do we have the salutation of the holy kiss? Why do we have the things that we have in the church of God? They are the feasts of the soul. To miss these is to impoverish the soul. To miss the communion service, to be out of the church when the church feasts are held, is to miss a season of strength for the soul. You can't afford to go hungry, to go lean, to go emaciated, to go impoverished, to go weakened, staggering down through God's work, when you could walk strong and strengthened by attending upon his ordinances and participating in them.

I suppose there were a dozen or more out there in the field, quite a number of workers. You know he gave his orders to the reapers to drop handfuls and help Ruth all they could. Who got the most strength from that meal there at noon-time in the field of Boaz? I don't mean who ate the most food; that is no measure of getting the most out of it. I mean to whom did that noon-day meal mean the most? It meant the most to the one that had worked the hardest. If Ruth had cuddled up under a tree out there in Boaz' field, and slept until dinner-time, and when she heard the dinner-bell ring had gone down, she would have been ashamed of herself. She would have had no appetite. She would not have enjoyed her meal. If you want to enjoy the ordinances of God, work for Him. Get hungry, then you will enjoy the meal. If you don't work for Him, you will never get hungry enough to know how to enjoy His feasts. Some of you have not a very vivid religious experience. It is not meaning much to you. You are not doing enough to have it mean much to you. Go out and minister to the poor. Go out and make sacrifices for His cause. Build more churches. Help on His kingdom in more energetic ways. Get hungry from hard work, and the Lord God will feed you and do you good. The Prayer-Meeting, the Church Service, the Bible Class,

the Bible Session, the Ordinances in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Ceremony of Feet-Washing, Holy Baptism, the Holy Kiss, the Communion Emblems—these mean most to those that do most. You can measure your spiritual power by the joy that these things bring to you. If a man comes to church and sleeps through the meal-time, he is not hungry from toil in God's harvest. He has not worked hard enough for Christ to enjoy religious refreshing.

Those people were out busily engaged, and then came in to the meal. They had a right to their meal. Paul declares, in substance, if you don't work, you ought not to eat. If you are too lazy to earn bread, you have no right to eat it. I wonder whether that might apply in the church of God? If you don't work hard enough to enjoy the communion of God, what right have you to partake of the communion of God? If you don't work hard enough for the emblems of the church to mean something to you, what right have you to be called a member of the church? If you won't work, why should you eat? That is the lesson of the corn field. Ruth sat with the workers, and enjoyed the meal because she herself was a worker. There was a bounteous provision made for Ruth—a provision above her expectations. Her very diligence won favors to herself. Boaz went out of his way to do more than the law exacted of him, much more than was the usual custom, because of the diligence of this woman. She won these favors because she deserved them. He gives to her bountifully. I cannot help admiring the beautiful spirit of the man that sent around to his reapers the word, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not." Let a handful slip from your hands for her. Don't do it so that she will see you do it, but do it as if by accident.

Give to the poor, but give to them in such a way that they do not realize that you are making the attempt to give to them. Give to them bountifully. Better than all that, give it to them without reproach. Don't put upon the poor with the gift you give to them the stigma of poverty. Don't say,

"Here is a dollar, but why don't you work so you won't have to beg?" Don't say to the poverty-stricken soul when it comes to the kingdom and asks for the bread of heaven, "Here is the bread, but why did you not join the church long ago?" Don't heap upon the hungry soul upbraidings for what might have been. That is not the spirit of Christ, nor of Boaz, nor of righteousness. Here is the hungry soul; feed it, give to it without upbraiding. How does Christ do? "He giveth to all men liberally"—and then scolds them? Does he? Read on—"and upbraideth not." Don't forget the word "Not" in there. It is put at the end for the sake of emphasis. Christ knew how to give. May He help us to learn! Some men never see an emphatic word unless it is at the end. "He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not."

I would like to see a Christian church that would know how to treat penitents, heaping upon them the riches of heaven, rejoicing with them in their conversion, sitting with them in heavenly places, singing the songs of heaven with them, but never once pointing the finger of reproach toward them and saying, or even thinking: "You are not as good as I am. You have not been in the church as long as I have. You are not as spiritual as you ought to be." God is the Judge; you are the encourager. Let us understand that. Boaz said to his young men: "Drop handfuls and help her along. Do not upbraid her. Do not reproach her. Do not scold her. Fill her soul with encouragement, that she may toil on, for to toil is honorable." In everything that Boaz did here he figured the Lord Jesus Christ. When a man comes into the church of Christ, how bountifully he is treated; how beyond the measure of his own expectation! How unexpectedly God cares for him, and the Spirit helps him! How without reproach the Lord Jesus Christ receives us back! I wonder whether Jesus, when He went out there to the mountain, with bleeding feet, in the darkness, after the lost sheep, and found it, spanked it for running away. Did



He take it home and pen it up in a barren field, to teach it that it did not pay to run away? What did he do with it? He carried it home on his shoulder, comforted it in his bosom. The spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ is the spirit of encouragement and helpfulness, not of rebuke and criticism. What we need is more charity for the sheep that are out; more love to drive us out to get them; more consideration for them when they come home. How long did Ruth work? She had her dinner; she had gathered a goodly amount. Did she then go home and rest? Some people do. When they get half through their work, they say, "Well, I guess I will rest this afternoon." There are people that won't work unless they must—people in the church that won't pray unless they must. If the preacher calls upon them, they will pray; but they won't do it if they can avoid it. Nobody made Ruth work until evening. But she goes right out and continues to work. "She did eat, and was sufficed, and left." "And when she was risen up to glean"—not to go home, but to glean, to go on with her work—she set a noble example for all of us. If you are in a place where you are doing well, stick to it; glean until evening. "So she gleaned in the field until even." She kept right at it, teaching the importance of getting a place in this world where you can work, and then sticking to that, persevering in the thing that is right, working in the place where you are doing well. Unstableness in business, shifting from one job to another, changing from one occupation to another, is not to be commended in anybody. Unstableness in place, not willing to preach here because there is a higher salary offered there;—this is the wrong way of making up one's mind to work for Christ. If you are in a place where you feel you are doing well, if you are bringing souls to Christ, stick to it until evening! If you are not doing anything in the field, if your ministry is not blessed, if you are not gathering any sheaves for Christ in the place where you are, don't you think you had better change your field? I don't believe in changing; I believe in

a permanent ministry. Yet there are times, it seems to me, when, if a man's usefulness is proved to be circumscribed in one place, he had better go to another place. I may fail in Huntingdon and succeed in Everett. I may not be adapted to do good in one place, yet be well fitted for success in another. I have not a universal power to adapt myself to success in all places. I shall try to find a place where I can work. It is a man's conscientious duty to study himself until he knows his limits; to find a place where he is likely to succeed.

How many people in the church are unstable! They don't stick to it until evening. They are all the time wanting something new. They don't like the order of the services. Why not have it some other way? I don't know what they would have if they had it their way. The spirit of discontent with the order of things is abroad in the church. They would like to have a change. And then, there is the preacher; he stands the same all the time; why don't he change around? He has a habit of putting his hand up to his forehead; why don't he put it to the back of his head, to rest himself? He has preached so many times; why don't he go away and let us get something new? I have heard that; haven't you? The preacher has worked hard for half a year to do good in the congregation; he happens to use the same illustration in the sermon that he used six months ago; and somebody, probably the meanest man in the church, who has not paid six cents to the support of the gospel in a year, raises a howl because the preacher has not been studying enough, uses his old stuff over. I want you to understand that to preach for years to the same people is a hard thing to do. If you don't believe it, just write out two sermons, and try to have the one contain nothing that is in the other. Why should sermons be so different? There is but one thing to preach—Jesus Christ and him crucified. And if they are wholly unlike, there is a probability that they are all wrong. What the world needs is one lesson—the sacrifice of Christ

for the redemption of the world from sin. What is it that Paul said he preached? Christ crucified. That was enough. Who has ever found any fault with Paul's limitations, with his reputation as a preacher? The thing that troubles me is that you are not Christian enough to understand that the voice of the minister is the voice of Christ. You are criticising the man because his diction is not good or his rhetoric faulty. You come to a debating society instead of a church service! Enter the church service with a critical mind, and you can find fault with any preacher that ever stood before you. You can kill his sermon and the power of his work in the congregation. You ought to come in and pray to God to help you to enjoy that service. Get yourself right, and the preacher will warm right up to you every time. I can tell just as soon as I get into a congregation whether I have struck a frost or a warming time. I know just as well as I know my name the kind of a crowd I have to talk to three minutes after I come in. I know when I have to talk to a crowd whom I have to pound into sensibility and a proper state of feeling, and when I am speaking to Christians who are hungry for the word of God. I have preached for thirty minutes before I could say a word of gospel. I had to preach down coldness and indifference and meanness. And in some audiences that is hard work. I had rather preach Jesus Christ for a month than to preach the devil out of a congregation for twenty minutes. It is a more respectable business, and a much easier thing to do. Try more and more to impress upon our people the necessity of coming to a prepared church service with a preparedness of heart for God's service.

She stuck to the work, she abode in the place of duty, she toiled until the time for rest came. The time for rest will come. Labor has its boundaries just as clearly defined as rest's boundaries. Some people do not understand that the time of rest is not a time of waste. They feel that they ought not to rest, because to rest is to waste. That is a mis-

take. If you want to preach well in the evening, don't you know that the less you eat for supper, and the more you are alone for two or three hours before you preach, the better for your congregation and for Christ? Have you not found that out? The preacher who wants to do good work in the pulpit, wants to honor God by preaching a sermon of power, needs to be alone with God, alone with his thoughts, quietly resting and thinking. "While I mused the fire burned." If that is a good thing for the preacher, how would it work with the membership? If I could preach to a people who would sit down and meditate for an hour before coming into the sanctuary, I believe I could preach with power. The congregation would exalt me into a powerful preacher in spite of my own lethargy. I would be ashamed to preach any less thing than the congregation would expect. The spirit of God would stir me to meet the expectations of that people. We need more communion with God, more meditation, more pondering upon the word of truth, to the end that we may come into the service and into the work of God strengthened. Repose measures strength. This woman saved all her energy for her work. She did not waste it in fussing about. Many people fret half their energy away. I suppose that is natural. They get nervous and excited. Their life is fretted away in concern. They have a fear they will not do well. I confess to you that I don't remember the time when my knees were shaky before a crowd. The remedy for that, my brother, is an absolute surety in your own mind of the thing you are going to do, the confidence that is born of the knowledge of the thing required of you. If you are fearful and worried about your power to speak, pray to God for more strength. After a while you will get so full of the spirit that you can't keep quiet. Then you can preach and tremble not at all. What is the trouble? We are self-conscious. The first thing we need when we get up for Christ is forgetfulness of self, keen remembrance of Christ Jesus and His message to a dying world.

## LECTURE IX.

What Ruth had beaten out, her gleanings for the day, she took into the city. "And her mother in law saw that she had gleaned; and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed." I call your attention to the home-coming of Ruth in the evening after her day's toil. The most beautiful picture that one can paint of rustic life is the evening scene as the twilight hour is creeping on. The mother is busy in the house with the evening meal. The shadows are lengthening along the lane.

"In the poplar tree about the spring,  
The katydid begins to sing."

The little children's necks are craning from the door to see the first sign of the returning father. When they see him, they give a shout and rush down the path to welcome him home. They gather at the frugal table, and it is a feast. It may be the simplest food in the world, but all the hearts that are there love each other. Read the "Cotter's Saturday Night," by Burns. The very charm of Grey's "Elegy" is the portrayal of simple rustic life. And the sadness of the "Elegy" is owing to the fact that these scenes are lost to these people forever:

"For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share."

Read Goldsmith's "Traveler." You won't find anywhere in all his journey a place that was so sweet as the little place up in the Swiss mountains, when in the evening hour the

housewife put her clean plates upon the clean board and set her frugal meal, and gathered her children and her loved ones about her. I have no sympathy nor respect for the young man that does not love the evening hours in the home. I am tired of this feeling that young fellows have, that as soon as they get supper and their clean clothes, they have to run to town and spend the evening in a saloon, or at the store, or at the blacksmith shop, or at the club meeting, or at some other place where the devil is nearer than he can be at home. Ruth went home after her day's work was over. And that is your place and mine. You have no business running around at night, getting into questionable associations. Show me the young fellow who loves his home in the evening, and I will show you one who will make an honorable home for himself in the years to come. Show me the man who runs around in the evening, and I will show you a young scamp who is not fit to have a home. If you have a good home in this world, you ought to thank God for it; and you ought to make it a home, not simply a boarding-house, a place to rest when you are worn out with the surfeits of pleasure and the questionable joys that come from running about. Ruth came home in the evening! She came home happy, because she had done an honest day's toil. She came to the only place in the world where there was real rest for her spirit—in the home, by the side of her old mother-in-law, whom she loved, where she could sit down and talk and rest and prepare for the night.

She was a frugal woman. Wastefulness is a sin. Just as much a sin as idleness. There is no difference between the man who is too lazy to work and the man who works and earns money and then squanders it on useless things. She worked out in the field, and carried the result of her toil home. She did not work and spend it in the saloon or on other questionable things. You have no business in this world to be anything but frugal. A spendthrift and an idler are alike an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and a

curse to the parents who brought them into the world. I don't mean by that that you have to be stingy. I have no sympathy for the man who holds a penny until the eagle screams. The best thing about Ruth's economy was that she was frugal when she was unexpectedly prosperous. Anybody can be frugal when he must be. You can save when you must save. It is hard to be frugal when you have fifty dollars in your pocket and no immediate demand upon you for it. It takes a righteous man then to keep his hand from dissipating his money. Before you spend the fifty dollars that you have no immediate call upon you for, stop and think. You say, "I earned this money; all right, I can do what I please with it." No, you can't. You have no more right to do that than you have to strike me on the nose. You can burn it if you will, but you have no right to burn it. That fifty dollars represents potentially a vast amount of good in this world. A missionary visited one day a prison away in a foreign country, where lepers and others who were down with incurable diseases were chained to dying and dead prisoners, so that they had to live by the side of death. They were given no food. They died by slow starvation. The missionary saw all this misery, and went out, saying, "God help me to see my duty here," and he went and hired a mule and loaded it down with loaves of bread until its back bent under the burden, and he carried it to the door of the prison, and with two soldiers he took it in and saw that every leper and every starving soul in that prison had bread. He might have spent that money for a bottle of whiskey. Had he any right to do it? You get a false notion when you have money given to you. You feel, "Well, now, I will do what I please with this; I am going to have a good time. Father sent me this down as a little extra spending-money, mother slipped this into the envelope without saying anything to father, as a little extra present. I will 'blow it in.'" Look out! That is a dangerous feeling in any young person. Before you spend your money, remember you have a right to stop and

ask yourself the question, What does this money represent potentially? What are its possibilities in this world? How many souls will it bring to Christ? How many hungry people will it feed? How many people will it educate and make powerful to do good work in the world? Before you can solve the question of spending that money, you have to solve all these other questions that depend upon it. Men ought to know this, and women ought to know this. Women often have little sense about money matters. They don't know how hard it is to earn it. They are not as careful in standing by husband and father in caring for it as they ought to be. Girls are constantly saying, "Give me more, give me more." You don't know what burdens you lay upon the hard-worked father that gives it to you. When you can give up a thing easier than your father can give it to you, you have no business to ask him for it, I don't care what it is.

I did not always realize that. My notion of the thing was that the more I got from father, the better for me. It is not so. I did not stop to think about the days of toil and the nights of worry that it cost my father to earn it. I only thought its possession meant so much ice cream, and this, and that, and the other thing; and away it went. Let us understand that the sacred honor of the home is back of the money that we spend. More than that, the sacred toil of motherhood and fatherhood is back of it. You have no business to be a spendthrift. A man that lives fast not only dissipates himself, but is a disgrace to his father and his mother, and a rioter in a community that is pledged for order and peace. Spend your evenings at home, and you will not learn these habits. They don't sell beer there. There is no billiard table there. There is no theatre show there, with its questionable attachments. Stay beside your old mother in the evenings, and teach your younger brothers to do the same. Spend the evenings with your old father; stand by them just as long as you can. It ought not to be a burden; it is your solemn duty. If you can't sit by them in the evening,



make those evening hours just as rosy as you can from a distance by dropping a word of kindness in a nice letter as often as you can. You will come to know later on, when you no longer have these auxiliaries to a good life, how much they meant to you. You little realized the power of mother's and father's love. All of you who were at the World's Fair (and those of you who were not there have read about it since) were probably impressed more with one thing there than with anything else—a little painting by Thomas Hovenden, of Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, down in Montgomery county. He painted a canvas and sold it to Mr. Harrison, the Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. The subject of the painting is "Breaking Home Ties." There is the old grandmother knitting in the corner of the simple room, cheap paper on the walls and no carpet on the floor, a plain old pine table, an old clock. There is a cat curled up before the hearth, asleep. There is a little toddling baby by the side of the old grandmother. Out at the door, with his back turned, is the father, with his pants in his boots and his whip in his hand, ready to haul the boy to the town and start him off from home. There is the sister at the door, ready to say the last good-bye. And there is the big tall boy, standing saying good-bye to his mother, with his hand laid in hers. She has hers laid over his, and she looks up in her boy's face and is saying good-bye to him. That good-bye meant much to that mother. That picture touched a chord in every heart. Women stood before it and cried. I tell you, the hardest thing in this world, if you are a genuine man or woman, is to give up your home ties.

As long as a boy has a genuine home-sickness in his soul for his father and mother, there is an element in him that is able to save him, some time, from ruin. When that is gone, I know not what there is next for that boy. He is in the whirlpool that will suck him down to hell. I know no hand save the hand of Almighty God that can snatch him out of the churning maelstrom of despair. Ruth spent her evening

at home. There would be fewer boys on the other side of the river in the Reformatory if they had spent their evenings where Ruth did. There would be fewer ropes stretched with murderers in this country if there were more people spending their evenings at home. There would be more seekers of religion on their bended knees in this country to-day if every boy spent his evenings at home. There would be purer religion, more devoted Christians, more of everything that is righteous, less of everything that is unrighteous, in this world, if the boys and girls would stay at home at night instead of running, God only knows where, and doing what no tongue can tell. The evening came, and she went home, carrying the toil of the day in her weary body, carrying the reward of her toil on her bended shoulders, and sat down there with her old mother-in-law. Preachers, I want you to go back to your congregations to tell your people the duty of making the home a centre of interest. Now, there is another side to this. I have talked pretty straight to these young people. I have no apology for that. Now I want to make a plea on the other side.

Some of you will have homes after a while. Some of you in front here have them now. Why, in the name of grace, don't you make the home so that a boy can stay in it; not only so that he can, but so that he will want to? Why don't you make a home for your boy, instead of a boarding-house? Some of you have a boy. Just as soon as he is big enough to make a noise, he is in the way in the home. He is told to keep quiet. As soon as he is big enough not to be afraid of ghosts, he is pushed up into the garret to sleep. He is given an old bed and an old dingy room. He has no place under the sun that is his save a miserable corner. His soul revolts. He breaks out from that. He goes forth. Then you sit in the gloom of the night and mournfully sing, "Where is my wandering boy to-night, where is my wandering boy to-night?" Why did you not sing before that, What can I do to keep my boy from wandering in the night? And you

would not have a song of woe over a wandering boy to-night. We have not much sense in this country nowadays as to the right relation of the home to our children. Why, it is an awful thing to drive a boy away from his home, to turn him loose without an anchorage in this world. I would sacrifice a horse, a farm, before I would sacrifice a boy. Did you ever buy a book for him in your life? Did you ever hang a picture in his room? Did you ever do anything for him except scold him when he is bad, and dig at him continually to be better? Now, I can't speak from personal experience about this. I am glad to say that I always had a good home. I was not driven out of my home; but I know boys that were. Let us learn to make a boy love his home more than he loves anything else on earth. And when he comes to marry, I want the deepest sorrow of his marriage-day to be the thought that he is giving up his mother and his home. I want him to feel that above everything else. God pity the fatherless, the motherless, the homeless soul!

Out there on the farm your father brought you up; and before your father, your grandfather brought your father up. For four generations they are asleep in the family graveyard. There lies your great-grandfather; he died eighty years ago. There is his name on the tombstone, cut in German. There is his son, your grandfather; he died sixty years ago. There is his name cut in the stone in English. And there is your father's name; he died ten years ago. There they are, all asleep. Do you know, before I would pull up stakes and leave that sacred city of the dead, and abandon those tombstones, I would think a long time. I would not pull up stakes from such a centre of anchorage as that unless I had a pretty secure thought in my soul that I could do better away than I could do there. I am sure I would not do in a moment of foolishness what many boys are doing—pack my trunk and run out West and take my chances. Ruth came home in the evening. That is the place for you and me. If you have a good home, make it a better home. If you have

not a good home, pray that it may become a good home to your soul. A good home is a good place to spend the evening of a well-spent day. I like the unity of the home; the holding on to the home power, the home ties, the home influence, just as long as it is possible to hold them.

A good home is a great stimulus to purity. I mean by a good home, a home where everybody is free in the evening to tell everything they did in the whole day. You are not fit to go home unless you are able to tell what you did the whole day. If you can go home and talk as Ruth did, over the whole day's performance, and tell it all without reserve, if you have lived clean all day, so that you can bring your life before the hearthstone in the evening and tell it in the light of the blazing fire, you are an honor to the home. Every confession at the hearthstone—of infinitely more value than the confessional—is a tie that strengthens the soul and counts for purity in the life. If you tell your old mother everything you do, you are not likely to do anything very bad. If you tell your father everything you did in the past month, you are a boy that is doing about right. I would take such a fellow into my bank, and I would not watch him with spectacles to see what he was doing. When you have to come home in the evening and the one question in your mind is, How can I keep mother from finding out what has been going on; how can I conceal it from father? there is something wrong there that is going to kill the home. It is going to destroy you; there is no question about it.

✓ Notice the effect of all this upon Naomi. You remember, at the close of the first chapter, when the neighbors said, "Is this Naomi?" she said, "Don't call me that any more; call me Mara." Now she forgets all that, and for the first time the bitterness begins to melt out of her life, and she begins to feel that she has a home. Here is somebody to sit with her, to converse with her, to build into her life and to receive from her life. And so again she is Naomi, and her soul is filled with gratitude, and her heart is touched, and she is

strengthened. She turns and puts a question to Ruth that I want you to ponder. As Ruth came in the door, Naomi said, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" I want you to ask yourselves that question every evening when you come home, "Where have I gleaned to-day?" It contains in it so much of the searching power of the gospel of Christ that I don't know any better text in the whole Book of Ruth for your soul. "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" The old mother's question is a searching question. It measures the deep concern of the mother-in-law. Where is your boy to-night? If you had asked, as Naomi did, every evening as your boy came home, and had been patient enough to listen to his day's routine, you would not have to ask that question to-night. When he came home and wanted to tell you, you perhaps said, "I don't want to be bothered; I am busy now." And when he got out of the way of telling, and came home and had nothing to say, you tempted him into secrecy by saying, "Where have you been to-day?" That is not the way Naomi asked the question. It was an inquiry of deep concern. There was no reproof, no sting, no cutting sarcasm. Yet I take it that half the boys that come home in the evening are met with the question, "What have you been doing now?" I have no language for that kind of thing. Try it on yourself some time and see how you like it.

"Where hast thou gleaned to-day? Come and tell me about it all. I am interested in you, Ruth. I have thought of you all day. At the noon-time, when I sat here hungry, without food, I knelt down and asked God to bless you, that you might bring home enough to feed us both at this evening hour. I wondered where you were; with what success you were gleaning. I wondered in whose field you were gleaning. I wondered how it went with you. I have been following you with my prayers, my sympathies, my thoughts, all this day. Tell me about it." And then Ruth sits down and tells the story of the day and lays the foundation of the mutual confidence out of which sprang a new home in Bethlehem, a

home of such tremendous strength that the Lord Jesus Christ sprang out of it, and had to call Ruth among His ancestors. Again I call your attention to the question. It measures the steadfastness of the gleaner. As long as she could tell every evening when she came home what she did during the day, it was a sign of her continuity in action and consistency in purpose. Then, again, I am going to ask you a question, a pointed question—Where have you been to-day? That question must be answered by you now. I don't mean where has your body been. I mean, Where has your spirit been? Where have your affections been? Where have your interests been? Where have you been to-day? Would you like to stand up and tell all the places you have thought about, all the things you have thought about, all the round of your life's concern since the sun rose this morning? Where have you been to-day? What have you thought? What have you lived? What has your soul fed upon? What have you gleaned?

Again, I call your attention to this thought—the word “where.” It asks for a geographical answer. A man ought to answer for the place he is in. What right has a man to be in jail, or in any other place, unless he can give a reason for his place. Where have you been? Where are you? I often think of that tramp that Joseph Walton met down on the pike near Coatesville. He was one of those whereless, wandering sort of fellows. Joseph said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I don't know.” “Where did you come from?” He said, “I don't know.” “Where are you going?” “I don't know.” “What are you doing?” He said, “I am just following those telegraph wires; I reckon I will get some place, some time.” When Joseph Walton told that story in church, some time afterward, a woman got up and said: “If I had been that tramp, I would have answered that question another way. In answer to the question ‘where am I?’ I would have said, ‘I thank God I am in a Christian church where I can speak for Christ.’ In answer to the question ‘where did

I come from?" I would say, 'I thank God I came from a Christian home where I had a righteous training and a good father and a good mother.' In answer to the question 'where am I going?' I would answer, 'I hope to be able by the influence of my home and my church to get to heaven. Pray for me that I may be faithful.' " There was a "where" in that life that centred in something and made it a power. Where are you to-night?

Notice the other side of the question, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" A man must remember that he has to answer for the time that he uses. He must remember that opportunity measures possibility, and possibility measures responsibility. So far as in you lies, do good to all men; not half-way, but to the full limit of your energy. Don't let anything interfere with that. "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" The last thought in the text that I want to impress upon you is the fact that we are all gleaners. We are beggars in God's field, without a right to do anything except in so far as His mercy and love make it possible for us to do anything. Gleaning in God's fields! Let us be grateful to Him who gives us the right. I bless God that He has sent into that field our Redeemer, our Kinsman, who, like Boaz to Ruth, redeemed her into the royal line. Just so Jesus Christ comes into the field of the world and redeems every child of God, and makes him near of kin to Him, and through Him an heir to eternal glory. Thank God that He can redeem you from beggary and make you a child of the Kingdom.

## Lectures on St. John's Gospel.

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### LECTURE X.

We have four views of Christ's ministry: Matthew's, Mark's, Luke's and John's. When one really wants to read for his own comfort and enlightenment, not simply the facts of the life of Christ, but the life itself, he turns to the Gospel of St. John. How many of you read John more than you do any other gospel? It is not like the others. It deals with the same things. John was a peculiar man; he lived so near to Christ. He was called the Beloved Disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. He nestled up close to Him. His life seemed to be thoroughly steeped with the spirit of the Master. He got hold of things, he heard things, he saw things, he realized things that the ordinary writer and the ordinary witnesser did not see and did not hear and did not understand. John, as you know, was the younger brother of James. They were both called by Christ Himself to be His followers; called from, if one may judge from incidental things, a fairly well-to-do family. The father had servants in his house, and Salome, the mother, is one of the women who, on a certain occasion, made very important contributions to the comfort of Christ. They were not a poor family, and the mother was expressly noted for her piety. She had brought up this young man in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He was peculiarly prepared from youth to become a power in the work when he espoused it. You know, perhaps, and perhaps you don't, that after the crucifixion John remained at Jerusalem and did what he was commanded to do of Christ—take care of his mother until she died, probably about the



year 59. Then he went into Asia Minor, preaching, carrying on the work of Paul, established a number of churches, and made his headquarters for the most part at the city of Ephesus. It was here he met with persecution. It was from here that Nero banished him to the island of Patmos. That was John's opportunity. There he dreamed the marvelous Book of Revelation, looked up into the City of God. He came back to Jerusalem in his old days, and died about the year 100, and aged about an hundred years. Such, in brief, is the life of the man. Note what he says about Christ. Look at the way he begins this marvelous gospel. It is unique. Read the first three words of Genesis, and then the first three words of this Book of John. How do they differ? They are alike. That is not true of any other books of the whole Bible. Here is a man who does know the place to start the narrative of Christ. He starts where the whole thing starts, with God in the beginning. It is a rather significant statement, it seems to me, to get this additional light on the Book of Genesis. There we read that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Here we read that there was somebody with Him when He did it. In the beginning was what? The Word. Alone? With God. That gives a vast amount of comfort to start with, that God was not alone when He stood out there to create things. There was the Word by his side; there were the holy angels to minister to Him, to obey His calls, to do His purpose. And somehow it makes warm with interest, it makes glorious with its surroundings, the marvelous work of God in creating the world, to know that He was surrounded by creatures of His own soul in that stupendous work.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." Is there any characteristic set forth of this Word? What about it; how do we know anything of this Word? What does John say about it? "And the Word was God." There we are, round a ring. We thought we had somebody besides God; now we have this somebody merged into God.

How can we understand that? Who can understand the mystery of the Godhead itself? Who can understand how three can be one, and one can be three? Christ down here in the world talking about the Father; the Father sent me away from Him. I am down here. I pray to the Father. I commune with the Father. I am here from the Father. And He turns around in another place and says, I and the Father are one. It is a mystery; and yet it is not a mystery. Christ and God could be one just in proportion as they thought alike, just in proportion as they were alike. If they were identical in thought, in purpose, in feeling, if they were alike, then they were one. It is not harder to see how three can be one than it is to see how three thousand can be one. You remember in your Sunday-school lesson, at Pentecost they were all together in one place with one accord. There was a oneness there. They were all of one mind and one soul. Whose mind? Whose soul? They were all self-centred the day before, and now they are all God-centred and alike. So here you have this thought, that God had companionship from the beginning, and that this companionship was identical with Himself. What, then, shall we say as to the characteristic of this marvelous beginning? Look at the fourth verse. Let us begin to study a little of the Revelation of this Word. What does it say? In Him was life. I wish you and I could come to understand the important fact taught all through the book, that God is the great reservoir of life. We talk about Him as the living God, it is true; we think about Him as defeating death. But we somehow have not come to understand that all life was inherent in Him in the beginning and returns to Him at the end. Just as much life as you have to-day, and just as much as any soul has, is the gift of God, the expression outward of His divine self to you. In Him was life. This is the Book of Life, as He is the source of Life. This is the revelation of Life, as He is the beginning of Life. This is the prophecy of Life. This is the consummation of Life. No wonder the Lord Jesus Christ

could come into this troublesome world in which men were dropping dead before Him, and death menacing and staring in the face of all, and could stand and say, in the face of death and all, "I am the Life." He knew where He came from; He knew the source of His power; He was the Life because He was God. Take out of Him His Godness, and He is dead. Put again into Him His Godliness, or His Godness, and you put into Him again Life. God could take chunks of clay and mould them into any form He wanted—monkey, baboon, tree, or pumpkin. But when He breathed life into a form, it was His own image. It was man.

Life, then, is God's attribute; it is the quality that marks Him as the thing He is. You could no more think of God without life than you could think of a day without light. That is the central thought that John takes here. God is life, and God's record is the record of life, and God's destiny is the destiny of life. He came as the revealer of life, as the dispenser of life, as the interpreter of life, as the divine benefactor endowing every soul with larger life, with a larger element of God. You have here this beautiful thought, which brings to me comfort always—that God from the beginning is a God of life, and not of death. For that reason death can never have any prominent place in God's economy. You can lie down and die; but you cannot stay dead if you are God's, for that would be impossible. He is a God of life. If you are alive you will live forevermore, if you get your life from Him. It is a part of you. It must come home to Him when He wants it. You are just a wandering spirit flitting around in a trackless void. And God's own purpose will draw it back to Him when He needs it. It is only the dead thing that falls out of God's purpose and is lost.

If you are alive in Christ, which means the spiritual life, the life that Nicodemus could not understand how a man could get, but without which Christ told him plainly he could not enter into the Kingdom, then you can never die. In the beginning, then, we have this picture of life. How

does this life come to make itself felt with us? In Him was life. How do we know that life was in Him when He came? Because life is an active principle. We cannot keep it still. When a thing is alive, it will move. That is what proves it to be alive. If you take out of it this motion, prevent it from manifesting or expressing itself in any action, it is not alive. I venture the assertion this afternoon that the measure of life everywhere is its expression in activity. John says, "And the life was the light." It was an illumination. It manifested the fact that here was an active, pulsing, throbbing, beating life. Touch the life and bid it be still, and the light is gone. But just as long as the life is alive, so long will the light shine. There is no difference between life and light. They are as inseparable as the valley and the hill. You can't have a hill without a valley, nor a valley without a hill. You can't have light without life, nor life without light, nor either without God. God is the life of the world; and because He is the life of the world He is the light of the world; and because He is the light of the world He lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Life breaks into light in the world. The rest of this history John had not time to write. If he had begun where God began with the light, and traced the history of the world to Christ, it would have taken him too long to write it. John is too anxious to get at the thing he wanted to say. So at the end of the fifth verse he simply stops. There is a great lull in the discussion. He practically says: "If you want to know what is between this and what I am going to say next, read what Moses said; read all the books that have been written. They are the great interlude. I have not time to put this down. Here is something I am interested in."

Here begins the second part of this marvelous book. What is it about? Look at the sixth verse. A tremendous jump in time here. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." What has that to do with all these things he has been talking about, about life and light and God and the

Word? Let us see. He could not say this unless he had said the other. The other would mean nothing without this. This would be tame history without that. There was a man. Just a man came. In another place you can read that Matthew saw him. He says what kind of man he was, what he ate, how he was dressed—speaks of him in a way that would lead me to believe that John came out of the wilderness with fire, and with terror, and with power. He was a manly man, a rugged man, a powerful man. "There was a man sent from God." How strange this reads from the pen of Matthew. Turn to the Gospel of St. Matthew. These are the generations of Jesus Christ; tries to find Christ away back in the line of Jewish ancestors. Turn to the Book of Mark, and notice how he finds Christ. He goes hunting for Christ in the prophecies of Isaiah. Take Luke, and see how he finds this blessed Christ. He traces Him in the mystery of the temple worship. John knew better than all that. He knew that Christ did not come out of Jewish ancestors; he knew that He did not come out of the prophets; he knew that He did not come out of the temple mysteries; he knew that He came from God, and that any man that had the right to speak for Him must come from the same place. Here is John the forerunner. My friends, you can speak for Christ if you are sent from Him. If you are not, you had better keep still. "There was a man sent from God." He is a power. You can trace your descent downward, or you can trace it upward, just as you please. John found the ancestry of this whole new dispensation around the throne of God. He came from God. Do you remember how the King and Queen of Spain received Columbus when he had visited the New World and had returned? The king had parted with his money and the queen with her jewels to send out his boats. They wanted to hear about this New World. So they received Columbus with marvelous interest, invited him to stand before the royal presence and tell of his unique journey to a new world. Columbus came from America. If a man

were to walk in here from India, you would all stretch your necks to look at him. He comes from a place you are interested in. You want to know how it is over there. You are not satisfied until you know something about India. And here is John. I am not surprised that the people listened to him. He came from a place to which the people were looking for something. He came from God. What has he to say? Listen to his message. Here is the first voice that speaks out in the New Testament for the Christ that is to be. Notice a peculiar thing. When Moses went down into Egypt, and old Pharaoh looked at him and said, "Where are you from; what did you come for?" do you remember what Moses said? "I Am hath sent me." It certainly terrorized that old Egyptian king, because behind that "I Am" was the scourge that brought Egypt into submission. It was not merely two words, it was the majesty of God in a subject and predicate. That made Moses great. He had a message, a command, a commission from a powerful source. So he led Israel in the name of I Am. And John says here in this gospel that John, the forerunner, came from the same source. That makes him pretty nearly like Moses, does it not? That is not all. For when the real Light came, and got into a dispute with the old carping, hard-hearted Pharisees and Sadducees, when they wrangled with him and drove him into a statement of his position, do you remember when they said, "What is the use of you talking to us? We are Abraham's children; we are none of your common rabble;" He looked at their self-pride and ancestral-proud spirits, and crushed them, when they boasted that they came from Abraham, by saying, "I proceeded forth and came from God." That beats the Abraham record.

Moses said, "I Am hath sent me." John was a man that came from God. Jesus Christ said, "I proceeded forth and came from God." I don't know about the rest. But I know, if this Divine Word is true, that Moses and John and Christ stood hand in hand around the throne of God and took their

orders from the same majestic King. They came with power into this world. We ought to listen to them. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Some of you people have never been sent; you have never had your commission yet. You think you have, but you have been disappointed. I want every young man to understand that he ought to have a commission from God to be something in this world. John was a power in the wilderness. He made such a turmoil because he came from God. He had a commission, and he stuck to that like old Peter Cooper's glue stuck to a board. He never let go. That made him a power. How many of you could say, if you were to stand up now, that, like John, you came from God? Have you been with Him, and have you a message from Him? Did you ever get down on your knees and ask God to give you a message to deliver to the world? Did you ever get on your knees and say, "God, here I am; send me"? Have you ever put yourself in such a position that a consecrated commission could be given to you—a position from which you could go forth to help the world and to honor God?

I like old-fashioned names and this exalted commission. I wish there were more Johns like that, and more Marys in this world. What did he come for? "The same," that is, John, came for something. Any man will if he has a commission from God. He is on no foolish errand; he is sent for a purpose. "The same came for a witness." What is a witness? If I come in here and tell you there is something wrong outside, there is trouble going on, two boys are fighting, you say, "Can that be so?" I answer, "Yes; Professor Saylor saw it too," and he says, "Yes, I saw it," he is a witness. He was there. John never could have been a witness for Jesus Christ unless he had been with Jesus Christ and knew what he came for. You can't witness for Christ unless you are from the same country, and know the same things, and can testify to the same experience; unless you have lived like Him, and have some communication with Him. What

can I witness about a miner out in the coal fields around McConnellsville? I have not been there. I have not seen him. His world and mine are two different worlds. If he were to subpoena me in court to say what he is doing this moment, what would I have to say? I would have to say: "I know nothing. I don't know anything. I am not a witness." John was a power because he could witness to the things he saw. And you can witness just as fully as you have been with Him, and have learned of Him, and know the things that belong to His house. The more a man is with Christ, the better witness he is. The more a man is in communication with the spirit of God, the better his witness of Him in the world. John was a witness. He was not the only witness. God has not been dealing with humanity for six thousand years with only one witness. Moses was a witness for God. He stood in heathen lands and declared for Him. Solomon was a witness for God. David was a witness for God. I wish I could call them all up—Moses and Joshua and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the long procession of men and women that have been witnesses for God. An honorable company! A noble record is the record for God in the character of His witnesses. John is in this line; that is all. He was a witness. Paul was a witness. Stephen was a witness; and his witness went up in smoke and prayer to the throne of God. John was a witness when he himself came with dripping head on a silver platter, murdered, his head taken from his body at the request of a cruel, scheming, heartless woman. The writer of this blessed gospel himself was a witness of commanding power when he said, "I saw a new heaven." On the record of his saying it you and I have been living and praying that we too, when the time shall come for us to get out of this rocky prison of difficulty, shall look up into the new City of God as John looked up from Patmos and saw it coming down out of heaven from God.

The lesson for you is plain enough. Here is the procession from Moses down. Are you in it? Are you a witness?



Has God been compelled to give you birth and nurture and mother and father and food and raiment and shelter and education and life, and you outside the line of witnesses for Him! You are an ingrate! All He asks in return for the multitude of blessings that He heaps upon you is that you shall stand in the line with all the holy men of old and say: "I too have been with Him, and I have learned of Him. He is good. Come and taste of the Word." John is a witness. Are you? Don't you want to be? Let that question sink deep into your heart;—a clean, searching question. Are you a witness for God?

## LECTURE XI.

John, as a witness, was valuable just in proportion as he had the life that he witnessed. John was simply one of that long procession of witnesses to which you ought to be allied, and with which you ought to be associated. John was a peculiar witness. He was not simply a witness, as he himself testifies that he was. His is a modest way of putting it. John was a peculiar witness of Christ's coming. This makes him different from other witnesses of God. He was a herald that came before. He was a forerunner. "Prepare ye for the coming of a greater than I." He was a herald on the mountain top. He looked to the east, and just as soon as he saw the rising light, and while the world was still asleep in the valleys below, still in the darkness, still in the night, still in the gloom, still in doubt, John saw the rising tides of heaven-born light. He stood on the mountain and called to the world, "Behold the Lamb of God." John saw Him first. That gives John a peculiar character as a witness, marks him out as the personal forerunner of our personal Saviour. I think John's vision of Christ's coming must have been to him the greatest source of pleasure of his life; to be selected from the multitude as the only man who was to see the Christ before others, and so to come and tell the world that Christ was at hand, that He was even in their midst. That must have been a great joy to him.

John very clearly testifies what he was not. He says "he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness to that Light." John never did, I believe, claim to be very much in the world. He did not say he was the Light. He came to bear witness to the Light. Who knows the difference between John and Christ? Who could know? How could any one know the difference? They were both men, both simple in their tastes and life. But infinitely different, be-

cause the one was the true Light and the other was the witness to that Light. How would we know the difference between the two if we should meet them? We would simply know the difference by the power that would be manifested in the light that is shed abroad from them. Suppose you were in a dark room all your life, and suddenly a little light were allowed to enter the room, the window-curtain would be drawn aside for the first time, and you would look out and see a star in the sky. You never saw such a thing before. "How beautiful!" you exclaim; "I never saw anything like that in my whole life; what a glorious thing that is!" Then, while you look, suddenly the moon comes into the space that is open to your gaze, and you say, "Why, that is more beautiful still; that is a better light than the other, a fairer witness of the light, a larger revelation of the light." But if you stood there until the sun sweeps into view, nobody needs to tell you which is the light. You know. It comes with such resplendency of light, with such fullness of light, with such a bathing baptism of light, that the world knows it is the light. It would not take long when you put Christ beside John to know which was Christ and which was John; not any longer than to know the difference between starlight and sunlight. Here was John; he was a power, he was glorious, he was wonderful, he was magnificent. We can only say of Christ, He was sublime from the first!

I would have liked to have been with God at the beginning of this chapter, "in the beginning"; when it was all night over this world and all worlds; when God started the light across the great plains of His infinite purpose. That was a magnificent sight. Did any of you ever get up in the morning and see the sunlight crown the mountains and flood the valleys? What an enthusiastic, striking, arousing, wakening, quickening, enlightening vision it is! But what must it have been when God opened the gates of His own purpose and flooded the universe with light, until it rolled, like an infinite tide of mighty waters over the whole domain of His

infinite purpose, and the world was bathed in light, the universe was suffused with light, and God stood revealed in the centre of the mighty, flooding, waving light! God said, "Let there be light." Just as soon as He opened His life to the world and the light flowed out, it was possible for Him to have witnesses—just that soon. For every man that will stand in the light can witness of it. Every man that will stand in the light can testify to the light. He can say, "I have seen it, I am in it, I know it." And every man that is quickened of God and is born into the light of God is a witness to that light.

Without the light you cannot witness for God. You can witness for the devil in the darkness. You can witness for hell without any of the revelation of heaven whatever; but you cannot witness for God. And you want to teach the world that. The man outside of the church—what can he say for the church? What right has he to speak for the church? The only man that has any authority to speak for God is the man whom God has commissioned. He has been born into the light, and he knows the difference between light and darkness. He can testify to the difference between them from personal knowledge. So God raises up a witness to Himself every time He brings a child into the kingdom of God.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God." Why, of course you could not stand in the light without being transfigured. When Jesus Christ went up to the mount of transfiguration, God opened His mighty throne and poured out the light that fell upon the world from His countenance, transforming the Christ and glorifying Him. You cannot stand in the light, you cannot stand in the baptism of God's infinite purpose in your life, without being made a son of His. He will purge and purify and cleanse and glorify you. If you are in the light, you are a son of God, and no longer a wayward, wandering scavenger out upon the dark places of life.

Now the dawn comes. Look at the nineteenth verse. This is the record of John. My friends, it is worth something in this world to make a record, no matter what it is. It is worth something to have a record. It was a great credit to John that he had a record. When any asked, "Who is John?" the answer was, "There is his record." Who is Brother Beahm? There is his record. Who is Brother John Brumbaugh? There is his record. Who was John the Baptist? There is his record. Who is this man John X? I don't know; he has never made a record. What good is he? He is simply a grazer in God's fields; he has never done anything in God's world. What is the very first thing that is put down over against John? Twenty years of God's bounty and no response; would that be a good thing to write down? If God helped him and blessed him and took care of him for twenty years, delivered him from his enemies, preserved unto him his family, restored his children when sick, helped him to educate them, and that man went out cursing and forgetting God, is that a good record? John the Baptist was preaching. I bless God for a man that has a record like that! He was preaching out in the wilderness—came bursting right out of the black wilderness of sin and superstition with his mouth open, preaching the truth of heaven. He was preaching; and the world heard him. Notice how those priests and Levites were stirred up in Jerusalem. They sent a man down to inquire "Who art thou?" John was preaching out in the world's wilderness of sin. So ought we to be preaching, testifying to the thing that we have, certifying to the thing that we have, raising our voice for the power that has been revealed unto us. John had stirred up a commotion down by the Jordan. Great crowds went out to hear him there by the Jordan. Great crowds went out to hear him preach. Multitudes followed him. The Levites and the priests were jealous. They sent down to inquire, probably in doubt, "Who art thou?" The first question is the question every preacher must meet in this world. When a man raises

his voice and says anything in this world, he must answer the question "Who art thou?" "I come preaching." But what right have you to preach? Who are you, anyhow? It is of infinite importance, of infinite service to the cause, that every preacher of it should know who he is. What manner of man are you? That is a powerful question. And unless a man can answer that, his preaching will be of little value to the world. John knew. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." "I am not the Messiah." He knew what he was not. He knew what he was. There are preachers of God that don't know that. They affect to do and to be able to do things which they cannot do. Every man ought to know his limits. Over the old Delphic Oracle of Greece, Socrates had inscribed this wonderful motto: "Know Thyself." John the Baptist, coming from heaven, from the Word, had learned that important lesson. He could give an account of himself. He knew his limits. A man one day told me, "I am not going to preach revival sermons any more; I am going to be a doctrinal preacher. There are lots of revival preachers; they are common. I want to be a doctrinal preacher, so that I will be of great service—called for on special occasions." He did not know his strength. He did not know his weakness. He will never be able to preach any doctrine or any other thing until he knows his own limits.

John knew his limits. Who are you, anyhow? What manner of man are you? Where did you get your inspiration from? What is your commission? What do you know? Are you preaching things that have simply become the rumor of the world, or do you know of God? The church ought to know what for. What are you, church? What are you in the world for? Some people think a church is simply an organization for political purposes, to control elections and get their friends into office. That is not what it is for. Some people think a church is simply a social organization in which men of congenial spirits get together to help each other on. They desire to hold oyster suppers and have a nice time of

an evening once a month, and the church is a convenient organization through which it is brought about. What is the church for; what is it not for? We ought to come to understand that the church is God's expression in the world, God's visible, tangible home in the world. And in the church there ought to be this one thing—nothing else—the light and the witness of the light. That is all. When they said to John, "Who art thou; art thou Elias?" he might have said: "Yes, I am Elias; I am the fellow you have been looking for; Elijah saw me in a vision. Here I am; put me on a throne, with a crown around my brow." He might have lied as many a man is tempted to lie when he has a chance to be exalted to a high place in this world. When the time comes that you have a chance to rise to a high place in this world because you can deceive somebody, you had better look out. You are subjected to a great temptation—just to submit, keep your mouth shut and let the mob push you up. John might have done that; but he said, "No, I am not Elias; I am just a voice in the wilderness; I am searching for the light; I have seen the light, I bear witness to the light, but I am not that light." There is the true manhood, the absolute manliness of the man of God.

I know nothing in the whole Book of St. John that appeals to me from the manly side with more strength than the positive truthfulness of John in the beginning of this ministry. "I am not that light." "And he confessed and denied not." "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "Art thou Elias?" and he answered, "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" And he answered, "No." They said again unto him, "Who art thou?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." He was not the prophet. He was not anything that they thought he was. He was what God had sent him to be. The half of us get started pretty well, but when the people begin questioning us we forget the original mission of life and change over and become the thing that

the people want us to be. John denied every question that did not tell his actual personality. What am I? I am what God commissioned me to be, and I won't be anything else, no matter what you do or say. It cost him his head; but it won him God's favor. He did the right thing.

These people were down there hunting for Elias, as they called him. They had been looking for this man, this vision, this marvelous manifestation that had been certified to from the ages back. They had been hunting him afar off. John said, "There standeth one among you." Many of us make a great mistake about this whole matter of finding Christ and finding the prophet. I think most people, when they shut their eyes and pray, think it is going to take about a day and a half for their words to get up to God. I said to a boy one day, "How far is it to heaven?" He said, "It is away off." I said, "How far off; as far as Philadelphia?" "Yes, sir." "Farther than that? Is it as far as across the ocean?" "Yes, sir." "Is it as far as the moon?" "Yes." "Is it as far as the sun?" "Yes, I guess it is." Where is it? Where is heaven? Who knows? Do any of you know? Go out with a string to measure the distance; how much string will you need? We get a kind of notion that God is away off yonder in the clouds, infinitely beyond the ken of man; that once in a while He opens the door of heaven and looks into the world; that at another time He shook the word of truth down into the world like a ripe apple from the tree of Paradise; and that then He shut up the heavens again and left us struggling alone in this world. John was a true preacher of the light because he declared, there is one in your midst. God is in the bread you eat at the breakfast-table. He is in the life you live to-day. He is as much in this chapel as He is in heaven, for He is everywhere present. When I told a boy that, he said: "Yes, that is so. God is right on my lip." And then he said, "If I would just shut my mouth I would have Him in my mouth, wouldn't I?" Well, why not? Don't you remember when Paul went into Athens he preached that



God is much nearer than you think, "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being"? He is not away off. John understood that. He said, "There standeth one among you." There is a nearness, there is a warmth of interest, there is a close kinship, there is an intimate relationship, there is a familiar fellowship between Jesus Christ and His children. When you are born into the light you are a son of God; and as sons of God, brothers and sisters; and as such you enter into the most intimate and most sacred communion with Him. People never understand that quite right. In the mediæval times Crusaders made pilgrimages to the tomb of Christ, a procession of men and boys under the red cross of Christ marching to the east over thousands of miles of difficulties and dangers and death, hunting God. You need not worry. The blessed gospel according to St. John reveals right here in its very first chapter the intimacy of the relation of Jesus Christ. You are at home in Him, and He is at home in you. You can live with Christ at home in your room, in your heart. If we were to pray nearer than we do, we would be heard better and get more.

I call your attention again to the peculiar spirit of John to prove that he was near to Christ. When Matthew heard John the Baptist preach, Matthew came and reported, "His fan is in his hand." Do you remember that remarkable expression? That is, Matthew heard the preaching of John the Baptist as a threat to drive men to do right. His fan is in his hand—he will thoroughly purge his floor. Then Mark came and declared, "He will gather his wheat into the garner." And then what? "The tares he will burn with everlasting fire." A tremendous thing! John must have preached fire and brimstone. Then Luke came and said, "The axe is laid to the root of the tree." This man John must have been a powerful preacher. There is a threat all through these reports. But when John, the writer of this gospel, heard John the Baptist preach, and came away, and they said, "John, what did he say?" John answered, "Behold the Lamb

of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He did not hear John make any threats; he did not care for any threats. He was waiting for the message from heaven. John, coming out of the wilderness, big, bony, uncouth man that he was, would naturally say it the other way. Behold a lion that will eat you all up if you don't behave. But John the Baptist got the thing right. He was close to God. And John the recorder heard the blessed message of this great herald when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Look at the gentleness, look at the sweetness, look at the comfort, look at the intimacy of the religious spirit here, that brings this right up to our hearts, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It does not say that He takes away the sinners. If God had wanted to take away the sinners of the world, He could have done that very quickly. One blow of His flashing lightning, and they would have been dead. But to take away the sins of the world and to save the sinners took the blood of Christ on Calvary. That was a different matter. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, that saves the sinners of the world, that gathers them into the fold of righteousness and cleanses them from all uncleanness, that saves them for His name's sake. John was a preacher and a voice; and his voice was for the Lamb of God, the cleanser of the world. He preached the whole day. Note what happened the next morning. John was out there in the wilderness; he had no friends. He was among a crowd of strangers preaching, "Behold the Lamb of God," doing his duty alone, nobody to help him, simply working all day.

The next morning he began again, and saw something. What did he see? "And the next day he seeth Jesus coming." Stand in your place of work, and you won't stand alone very long. Jesus will get very close to you. He will be by your side. He will help you. John could not stand in the wilderness and preach forever alone. The angels of God would have petitioned the Father for leave to come and be

his companions. You can't stand in this world and do the will of the Father and be left friendless and comfortless. Did not the angels come and minister to Christ? You are in a place where it is hard for you to do right. You are going through a great temptation and struggle. Stick to it, and to-morrow morning Christ will stand by your side. Somebody is going to come out on your side. Were you ever in a position where you were trying to do what was right, and where at first everybody else was against you? And you simply stood, in the meekness and quietness and gentlemanliness and manliness of your own personality, for what you believed to be right, and after a while somebody was convinced that you were right. Some one came and stood by you. You had companions. Did you ever see this transformation as it is going on all the time in the world? You don't have to stand alone. The next morning he seeth Jesus coming. I want you to understand that what Jesus did for John the Baptist He will do for you. He came, and when He came John knew Him. He knew Jesus just as soon as he saw Him. Sometimes our help comes to us and we don't know it. Men get over on our side and we don't know it. We have not observed our position clearly enough to know it. But just as soon as John saw Jesus Christ he knew Him, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." No misunderstanding about it. "This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for He was before me." There is the testimony of the witness. Jesus came; John had company. I want to impress upon you the importance of taking the place in this world to which God sends you; doing your duty as God informs you. When temptation comes to you, as it came to John, you will be prepared to face it, not alone, but with all the organized power of God on your side. The church comes out from the world and takes a stand against it. It is unpopular, it is in the minority, but it is right. It can afford to stand right there, just exactly as God wants it to stand, until the world shall melt

and surrender and yield and come to it. You have the assurance that the next morning He will come. Just stand and wait and fight and pray and struggle on; God will make the church triumphant in His own time. Do your part while you have a chance. [“The night cometh wherein no man can work.”

## LECTURE XII.

## A PURPOSEFUL LIFE.

A Sermon preached in the Chapel of Juniata College, April 4, 1897.

"For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."—*1 Cor. ii. 2.*

It is the language of Paul addressed to the Brethren at Corinth in a letter that originated in a peculiar way. Paul had promised to return to the Corinthian church, but was detained in Asia, where, if you will read the beginning of the letter, you will find that he had been beaten and probably imprisoned, and had suffered such hardships, and was sick so long, or, as he himself describes it, "was near to so great death," that he found it impossible to keep his word with the Brethren in Corinth. Instead of making his second visit on time, and, remembering his promise and the disappointment that would naturally follow, he addresses a letter to them. Instead of going in person to preach and to minister unto them, he sent this loving epistle.

No doubt the church at Corinth looked for great things when Paul should come back. I will read the first verse of this chapter to show you why I think so: "I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." There had gone up to the city of Corinth a marvelous record of this great man, his wonderful scholarship, his splendid powers as a preacher; yet he says, I came not with these gifts. I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom; I came unto you bearing testimony of God. Then he reports his first purpose: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." I like that statement. I like a man who knows what he is about to do, and is not afraid to say it. It is a square, consistent, business statement

of his purpose. He did not go up to Corinth in doubt, shifting, hesitating, adjustable. He went there knowing what he went for. All through Paul's career the keynote of his life is to be read and understood from one fact: he lived a purposeful life; he had an aim, and he stuck to it. He had a purpose, and he lived it out. So I speak to you, taking these words of Paul as my text, upon the value of a life with a purpose in it, or upon the value of a purposeful life.

What does it mean when Paul says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"? It would begin to look as if Paul were a specialist. If a man were to come into this room and say, I can talk to you of nothing but botany, or geography, or history, or electricity, you would say, "He is a specialist." That is Paul's open confession. "I am a specialist. I come to you not pretending to know or to do everything; I come to you to do one thing—what Christ taught me to do through His crucifixion. I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The danger in taking a text like this lies in the fact that we get an idea from it that Paul meant to give all his time, every moment of his life, every thought of his life, every act of his life, to this one thing, to the exclusion of every other thing. Reading it in that light, we get a kind of false notion of Paul. Understanding it in that light, a great many men have lived falsely after the manner of Paul. Paul did not mean by this that he would not speak to them about the weather, should he meet them on the street; that he would not enjoy with them the felicities that come from good health; that he would not talk to them about the glories of the sunset, the beauty of the architecture of the city, the beautiful sculptures, and the thousand and one things that would pass before his observation and challenge the attention of any man, Paul not excepted. It does not mean that he would shut himself away from all these, as some would have us to understand. For if it did, Paul would have been a fanatic, which he never was. There are

men who foolishly undertake to do literally what Paul says here, without understanding the purpose of Paul's language. I heard of a man who sold shoes with the remark, "I sell the best shoes, because I am Christ's agent." Other men follow the same fashion, obliterating all sense of proportion, and fairness, and right; who, indeed, would remove themselves from society and live like the hermit Kelpius, in a cave on the Wissahickon, isolated from all mankind, that he might hear nothing, think nothing, be nothing, but the one thing that he had excluded himself into becoming, in the conviction that he was doing what Paul did. If Paul had done so he could only have gone to Corinth blindfolded, with all his senses sealed up. He was a man whose life was awake to everything going on about him. He knew when he went into Corinth that a thousand things would demand his attention, a thousand things would demand his time; but upon one thing he had made up his mind: he was going to know one thing there, and make every other thing tributary to that one thing—Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

In other words: "I have a purpose. I shall keep my eyes straight before me. I shall give myself to nothing that will interfere with my one object. I shall go to those things that interest me, but I shall make them all tributary to my one central purpose." He never stayed away from his religious duties to perform any secular service. He never stayed away from a chance to preach to entertain company in his home. He never sat in his room as a student and studied his Greek or Latin or other lessons when he ought to have been in the church of God. He knew one thing he had to do. He determined to do that and allow no other thing to interfere with it. Some of us have not learned that. I have known students in this school that have not learned that. I have seen students sitting in their rooms studying or reading a book, pretending to be members of the church, and allowing the prayer-meeting, with its songs and services, to go unheeded and unattended. To kneel down after that sort of neglect

and pretend to be a child of God is certainly not like Paul, could not be like Paul. If he were a student in this school he would be in every service here. If he never learned his Greek alphabet, he would be in this church. This one thing I do, this one thing I am going to know among you—Jesus Christ and Him crucified; whether I know my arithmetic or my geography or not, this I will know.

Everything else had to adjust itself to his one purpose. He could do anything or everything that did not interfere with the one thing that he had determined to do. Other things were not excluded, they were simply made tributary, subordinate to the central purpose that he had determined upon. If there is anything in this world that people need, it is to have in their hearts and lives a dominant thought that shall direct them in everything; that shall make everything yield to it; that shall be one constant, continuous, persistent force controlling them under all circumstances. You need that, as Paul needed it when he went up to Corinth.

Take a lower point of view. Suppose I should say to you, "I am going to go to Paris to make money. I am going to stay five years. I shall spend my time for five years in Paris, and my sole purpose is to get rich." Then you say, "Are you going to go to the art galleries?" If I answer like Paul, I would say, "That depends." Depends upon what? It depends upon whether that would interfere with the thing that I resolved to do. "Are you going to see the statuary in the Luxembourg?" That depends. Depends upon what? Upon whether it will interfere with the thing that takes me to Paris. I go to Paris to make money. I may do these other things if they do not interfere with that. If they do interfere, I will not do them. Everything must yield to that. I am going to make money. That was Paul's view. He could see everything in Corinth that Corinth had to show to a wide-awake, scholarly man, but he would not see them if they interfered with his purpose. A man has a right to do the things in this world that broaden and strengthen and sustain



and help his life, provided these things do not interfere with his central purpose. What right has a student whose one purpose in school is study to sacrifice his time to things that do not contribute to study? Absolutely none. He ought to enter the school as Paul entered Corinth, saying: I am determined to do one thing among you—to study my lessons and study them well. What can I do? Can I practice in the gymnasium? Can I take walks in the open air? That depends upon whether they interfere with the thing that I came for. If they do interfere, I will not do them. Can I afford to be a rowdy in school? That depends. Depends upon what? It depends upon whether I want to be one or not. That is the point in it all. If you have resolved to be a man, to be a woman, it won't pay you to learn by being a rowdy. Should I steal in the community if I had a chance? That depends. If you want to go to jail, to suffer the ignominy of being regarded as a thief in the community, steal. But if you want to be a man, if you want to live the truth, if you want to obey the law, if you want to be or to do anything that is decent, then you can't. It depends upon what your central purpose is.

I honor Paul because he set that standard for me. He had in his mind from the beginning the thing that he was going to do, and he lived his whole life to that end. That is what counts in this world. It does not pay to scatter water all over the pavement in the hope that you will wear the bricks away. But drop one drop after another upon one spot on the brick, and you will drill it to pieces. It is having an aim and a purpose and pressing continuously for that; diligent in business, persistent in business, continuous in purpose, not shifting, not yielding, as many do—that makes life glorious. Paul learned that from Christ, Who said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and then all these other petty little things, these unimportant things, these inferior things, shall be added unto you. But what is the use of multiplying these in your life if you have no central pur-

pose to which they contribute? There is nothing more to be deplored in this world than an aimless life; living without a purpose, shifting, changing from day to day, like a boat on the water without a rudder or a sail or a compass, driven with the winds; as changeable, as variable, as unsteady as the breath of air that sweeps across the water. What is more to be deplored than a life that drifts with its own impulses, its own passions, that has absolutely no central purpose, that eats to-day because appetite calls for food, that drinks to-morrow because appetite calls for drink, that sins in all forms of indulgence because appetite calls for gratification, that drifts as foolishly as a man who would take his seat in a carriage, throw the reins to the winds, strike the horses a blow, and trust to the dumb animals to take him whither they would! His course would be no more uncertain than yours in life, moved by your own impulses and passions, without a purpose.

The great value, in addition to what I have said, in living a life with a purpose lies in the fact that it gives tone, color, character and consistency to the whole life. A great purpose, once selected, determines the whole tenor of your life. Note an avaricious man. You can see it in his face. You can see it in the way he handles things, in the way he touches everything. He has the bargain-counter spirit, to give little and take much, written in every lineament of his countenance. He is avaricious, and you know it. Note a man who is contemplative, reflective, meditative, thoughtful, and it writes itself upon his countenance, it expresses itself in his footstep, it shows itself in the language he uses, it mirrors itself in his whole life. When you have once selected your life purpose and lived consistently to that, you become like the thing that you have resolved to be. I read, years ago, a legend of an artist in Seville, who was sent out to paint an angel. He walked the streets of Seville week after week to find a face, a human face, that would represent an angel. He studied every one that came, and when he finally obtained his model and began to paint, his heart warmed to his purpose,

and he wrought with such exceeding zeal that after a while there appeared upon the canvas, line by line, a marvelous face—an angel face. He took it to the king for his reward. But to his great surprise, when he presented the picture the king turned it indifferently aside, and looked at the man. “Why,” exclaimed the king, “I do not need to buy that portrait of an angel; your face is better than the face you painted.” He had determined to know an angel so thoroughly that he became like one in his face. His character, his life, his tone, were all wrought out from his central purpose. There is a celebrated artist to-day in Paris who is shunned on the streets by innocent people. He looks like vice, like the impersonation of sin in its worst form. He studied vice in the dens of infamy, in bawdy-houses, in rum shops, in all its most vicious forms; and he has reveled in that sort of thing until he is like it. He can never paint it out of his face, nor work it out of his life. When you have settled upon a purpose, that purpose moulds your life, transforms you bodily, spiritually, intellectually, to the thing you desire to be. A good detective, who never saw you before, could come in here, and, when you walked out, tell what business you follow by the way you walk. The shoemaker has a peculiarity in his gait, the preacher in his, the artisan in his. When you once have a purpose in life, it is reflected in all you do. A man cannot be a hypocrite to any great extent in this world. Something tells on him always.

Having selected such a purpose, it ennobles your character by making it more elevated, by giving to it a higher dignity, a higher worth. The man with a purpose is always worth more than the man without a purpose. His purpose may even be low, and yet he is a man that is more to be feared than the purposeless man. The one man in the community that I am afraid of is the man that is persistently, continuously bad. He is a dangerous man in the community. He is hard to reform. How we shake our heads in doubt when a man who has been using tobacco for twenty years, or

using liquor for twenty years, or swearing for twenty years, or lying for twenty years, proposes to quit such practices! It is well-nigh impossible for him to change. Nothing but the grace of God can change influences like that. Our physical nature is natural. We are the thing we have been doing. Such a purpose as Paul's ennobles character by giving to it a certain elevation. It breaks up the monotony of life. There is a difference between a level landscape and mountainous scenery. There is greater beauty and sprightliness and life in a mountain country than there is in the level plain. A life that is one changeless monotony is like a spread out table-land. I like a life that breaks up sometimes into Alpine peaks that catch the sun and reflect some of the glories of the heavens. You can't do that, your life will not take on these high phases, it will not shine with resplendent power, unless your purpose elevates it to the place where God is.

Some of you were baptized the other day. That gladdened my heart. I am grateful for that. I wish it might be said of this school, as of every school, that every student in it who seeks to know, is seeking in the light of the truth of God. I wish it were unanimous. What does it mean to join the church? It is taking upon yourself this same purpose that Paul took when he went up to Corinth. It is resolving to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, to have no purpose above that. It is a covenant with God to live faithful until death. It is putting a new purpose into your life, a higher purpose, a broader purpose, a more noble purpose. It is making you unselfish. It is making you more Christlike. When a man joins the church he no longer lives for himself alone. He lives now to the glory of God. He lives to do good. He sees that he can best do what he is to do in the church by doing good to others, by serving instead of being served. He learns that exaltation comes only as humility precedes. It means the adoption of a new ideal, the taking up of a new career. It is infinitely higher than the taking up of any other career. It is a great thing when

a child begins to go to school at the age of six. He has resolved to know something. He starts to school. He is going to receive a new outlook upon life. It is a great thing when he resolves later on to leave home to go to school or to go into business. It is a matter of great moment in his life. But to enter the church is infinitely higher than anything else that a man can do, since the end that he seeks to accomplish is infinitely above any other end that he can seek to achieve. If he is concerned about his education, about his home life, about his business, about other things that interest his life, he ought to be infinitely more concerned about the things that touch his higher life and move to his soul's good.

When a man takes upon himself this ideal purpose there is no disappointment in his life. Little streams take holidays, larger streams never. Little lives take holidays, larger lives never do. Paul had no holidays. "This one thing I do." Paul is the persistent and unchanged man. He is not as uncertain as the stream that wanders out from the side of the hill, and in the summer season deserts its channel, and the bare rock and the absence of water meet the thirsty traveler. The little stream may be elsewhere, floating on the breezes, shining in the dewdrops, laughing with the flowers, climbing in the sap of the trees. The wandering life of the little stream may be pleasant and beautiful, but the little stream has deserted its home. And the cattle that walk its banks in search of vegetation and refreshment must go unsatisfied and thirsty. But when you go to Niagara how different it is! There is the same unchanged, sweeping, mighty mass of waters. You stand and see it make its awful plunge and say: "In an hour it must all come down. There can be no more water there." But when the hour is over the stream still flows. It flows forever! This is a type of the Pauline spirit; a type of the life that has a purpose, that is resolved to do one thing and do it well, that knows no change, no shifting, no uncertainty.

A purpose like this makes character and destiny. That is, when a man determines that he shall know Christ and not know some one else, some other power, his life begins to move over toward Christ. His point of view changes. That is what it means to be a Christian. You try to know yourself, you try to know this or that point of view; but when you come into the church you must stand with Christ and know the world from His point of view. You must know heaven and your duty from the place where Christ was crucified. Your abiding tabernacle must be on Golgotha. Again, when a man accepts Christ and Him crucified, there is only one thing left for him to do. He must continuously stand by Christ. He must raise the cross of Christ. He must live for it. He must call others to it. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is your business as a member of the church to stand with the cross up and your voice ringing out, "Come and live."

It may be wise to notice that this purpose has no limitations. You may feel that it was all right for Paul to go up to Corinth knowing nothing but Christ and Him crucified, but it would not do for you. That it is all right for preachers who have nothing else to do. But to say that it is not right for you is to limit the power of Christ and to put Him to open shame, to make of none effect the sacrifice that was made for all the world. It is just as much your business and your life as it was Paul's. If you have chosen to stand for the cross of Christ, let me beseech you to do it resolutely, to do it persistently, to do it without any fluctuation in your purpose. Sometimes it is easy to stand, sometimes it is hard. Sometimes you can stand in a great crowd, and that supports wonderfully; sometimes you must stand alone, and that takes courage. But if you have, as Paul had, a central purpose, you can stand whether alone or with many. You will have to stand continuously for the thing you have es-

poused, otherwise this espousal will be of no avail to you. It will mean nothing in your life. It always seems to me a matter of great comfort, as I look forward to it, to be a member of the church. I like to think of the time when I shall enjoy the companionship of all those who have been members of the church. There have been members of the church in days past that I want to know. I never saw them in the flesh. I want to see them in the spirit. There are things here that Paul wrote that I do not understand; doubtless I never shall while I live. I should like to talk with Paul about these things. I should like to see him. There are other men whose names are closely identified with Christ that I would like to see. I can't do it here; it is absolutely beyond the range of possibility for me unless I do the thing that they did, and make the cross of Christ the central thing in my life, and live for it. Then I shall come with them into Christ's glory, and know them as they know Him. We shall be together. I should like to see John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, the marvelously rugged but marvelously noble man who came to tell the world of the Christ that was to be. I should like to know him. Then I should like to see some of the men who have made the church glorious in the years since, who did not walk hand in hand with Christ over the hills of Judea, but who since that, in faith, have walked close to Him, have labored for Him, have taken upon themselves the Pauline purpose of knowing nothing save Christ and Him crucified. I want to see some of those men. You can name over in your heart those that you knew. It may be your mother. It may be your grandparents. It may be your father. It may be somebody near and dear to you, who has lived righteously, who has done his or her part to reveal again the cross of Christ to the world.

You want to see them. You have a right to see them. But in order to do that you have a duty to perform—that of living so that you are worthy of them. "I determined to know nothing amongst you, save Jesus Christ and Him cru-

cified," that I may teach you aright, that I may induce others to do right with me. When you read this text, or think it over, don't forget the last word. It does not read, "I determined to know Jesus Christ," but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." You must not take that last word out of it, if you want the power of the text. You are not to study Jesus Christ as a wonder that came in miraculous and uncertain ways into the world. You are not to know Jesus Christ as a great socialist that broke down the walls between labor and capital and made all men equal. You are not to know Him as a great philosopher who came to exemplify again something of the glory of the Greek philosophy. That would not be Christ. There is no salvation in Christ save in the crucified Christ; the whole power is in the life that went out for you and for me on the cross. That makes your life and mine a crucified life, if it is to be a redeemed life. That makes us sing, with a wealth of meaning to us:

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime."

When we come to accept this as the high ideal of our life, and try to live it in our lives, then comes to us the promise of Christ, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That is, when a man lives the life of Christ, the crucified Christ, a life of love and of self-surrender, he comes to live a life of rest and of peace. There come to him the same feelings that come into the heart of a child when the twilight falls, the world of glory is faded, the world of sense is hushed, the world of forms is gone, and the little child steals into its mother's arms, nestles close to her heart, and lives in a world of love and a world of rest. So the child of God in hours of weary waiting and troublous trials hears, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."



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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE  
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A RESOLUTION OF THE

BOARD OF LAND MANAGERS  
PASSED AT THE

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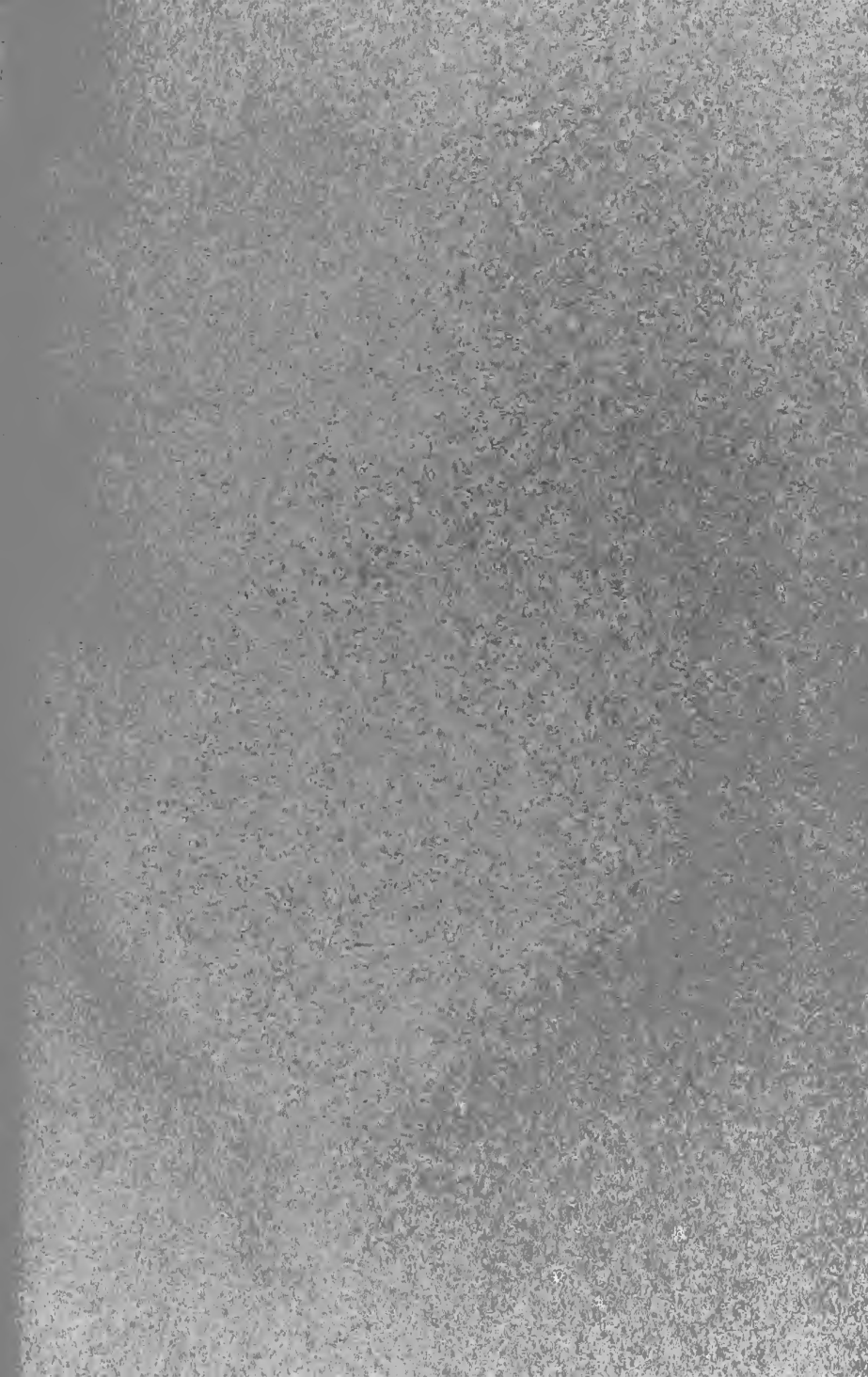
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